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# FAITH AND FACT

A STUDY OF  
RITSCHLIANISM



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TORONTO

# FAITH AND FACT

## A STUDY OF RITSCHLIANISM

BEING THE ESSAY FOR THE NORRISIAN PRIZE, 1908

BY

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WITH PREFACE BY THE RT. REV.

THE LORD BISHOP OF SOUTHWARK

*οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν*

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## PREFACE

WHEN I was asked by the writer of this Essay for some sort of preface, I feared that a preface to an essay might be disproportionate and incongruous, and only consented out of gratitude to the writer for great services to my diocese, and from admiration of the way in which one so brilliantly endowed devotes time and labour without stint to the children of the poor. But when I came to read his work, my mind changed altogether. If this is an essay by origin, it is hardly less a handbook by character: and it may be useful to point out that we have in it something which was really needed, and is, so far as I can judge, exceedingly well done. For the interest of the subject reaches entirely beyond the limits of theological or philosophical speculation. It concerns, and vitally concerns, all those who think about the relation of Christian faith to modern thought and knowledge. It concerns them in two ways. Ritschlianism is both influential and typical. As an influence it has reached far, and is present in many places where it is not named or recognized. One who does not know the influence at its source will deal clumsily with its results. But it is also typical. Many minds in the last few decades have

been Ritschlian without knowing it. If there had been no Ritschl, there would have been some one else very like him. His is a system which fastens upon some of the most characteristic features of modern thought, detects their illuminating meanings, discerns in them the means of deliverance from old mistakes, both in speculation and practice, and revels in the discovery that what seemed an enemy is first a liberator, and then a defender, of the essentials of that great faith which has given to Europe all that is best in her civilization, and carries the only promise of a world-religion. To watch such an attempt with appreciative and admiring attention, to see how it works out, what it gives us, and what after all it may take away, to observe in this great and typical instance what is the characteristic strength, and what are the equally characteristic weaknesses, of one whole great way of thinking, is evidently a duty, and a duty of keenest interest, to all who are themselves trying to think upon these great topics. I value and dare to recommend Mr. Edghill's essay because it seems to me to be quite an admirable attempt to help us in this useful and delicate task. It is quick and lucid, without shrinking from detail. It sets the subject skilfully into its context with the previous developments of thought. But its greatest merit is that it is entirely respectful, and yet quite independent. It shows that combination of real and eager docility, with a secure standard of judgment, which belongs to the best and most hopeful forms of Christian theology. I am less diffident in so speaking when I remember that other parts of Mr. Edghill's theological work



have won him marked approval and trust from the mature and critical judgment of Professor Swete.

Perhaps having said thus much I have done my part, and should at once make way for the Author. But the interest of the subject tempts me to go a little further. Why is it that Ritschlianism is so typical, and the study of it therefore so instructive?

I think first and chiefly because it was the most important attempt to challenge for Christianity the thought of an intensely empirical or inductive time. 'To believe in nothing which you could not claw' was, we remember, in conversational caricature, the tendency of the time. At last it seemed that the overdue achievements of Bacon's prophecy were to come true. The old things were to be left behind. A new way and method was to open the closed doors, and reset all the problems, and sweep onwards to victory in every sphere. It was the way of the chemist's or biologist's analysis, and of the inductive logic which was its counterpart. The method and the logic brought over the associations of the sciences of external nature to which they had been first triumphantly applied. Metaphysics were old-world lumber. Mysticism, if the word may be used to gather up the action of any direct or intuitive capacities of the human spirit, was tabooed as perilous, or despised as sentimental. It was a difficult time for the Religion which had old and honourable alliances with metaphysics, which was at home with deductive logic, and had always claimed a commanding place in regard to truth and morals for the intuitions of faith and conscience. Then

it was that to Ritschl, but not to Ritschl alone, there came home the thought, simple, luminous and far-reaching, that Christianity was after all an inductive religion. Alone of the religions it had come in along the way of fact. Fact, not theory or ideal, was its theme and burden. Before men talked of development and evolution, the evolution of Christianity out of the old Covenant, and its own reliance on development were anticipations of what they would say. But above all, one fact unique, supreme, but central, had been alike its credential and its message, and its standard both of what was true and what was good: the fact of Jesus Christ, living, dying, risen. Further, that fact was of such a kind that it interpreted and heightened the values of all the lesser facts of like sort, the voices of prophets, the examples and testimonies of saints, the moral victories of the defeated, and the truths won by the childlike, over a range of echoing experience not less wide than life. So 'back to Christ' was the common thought of varying minds: and men read the Gospels more and talked of 'the Gospel' less: and some, forgetting that fact demands analysis, spoke of all 'doctrine' as though it were an encroachment on life; while others delighted to show that not by *à priori* methods, but by the analysis, largely intuitive and Spirit-led, of what Christ had been and spoken and done, the Christian doctrine had grown. But every way it was a great change. The note of it rang clear to us in Oxford when Scott Holland preached his first sermons before the University, and I well remember how a representative theologian

of the elder school said to me, "I have always been trained to think of Christian theology as derived by deduction from fixed principles: but this seems an assertion of its inductive character." The criticism was significant and partially true.

Further, the temper of the time was not only inductive, but agnostic; blankly so in many who held any spiritual truth to be unprovable and uncertain, and who became for the time the most formidable antagonists of Christian faith: but equally so, though 'with all the difference,' in believers who recognized what the best lessons of time had done to rebuke hard dogmatism, and to emphasize the consciousness of ignorance as a necessary part of all true knowledge. It was to them one true link between Christians and their opponents.

Christian agnosticism was the reverent temper which made men draw the morals that were suggested by the stupendous extension of knowledge, by the resetting of truth in all departments, by the historical survey of many phases of thought positive in their day but transient. Such men felt that the knowledge of Himself which God had surely given was a truth ringed about and interpenetrated by the ignorance of fallible and finite minds to whom it was entrusted. This feeling, paralysing to faith in some minds, but in others recognized as giving to faith more depth and reality, prepared a ready response for teachings which, like those of Ritschl, offered the prospect of a sufficient certainty, while disowning speculative ambition.

One other point less obvious, but not, I believe, less real, in which Ritschlianism seemed to meet a



deeply felt instinct of Christian need. Men felt that for Christian faith something more was needed than the relative approval and compliments which were the best testimony that the truth could receive from the critical and comparative labours of contemporary thought. Something was wanted that was unique, supreme, and commanding. This could never be given by observing that Christian speculation had reached (if it were so) further than Plato's, or that the Christian West had thought more clearly and effectively than the non-Christian East or gave a more lucid and practical treatment to the moral problem. It could be found only in that which was the very centre of the Gospel, namely, the way in which it had come, distinct from all the philosophies and from all the movements, reversing and yet fulfilling all the common ways of thought and life. Ritschl stood forth to meet this with the offer of allegiance to the Christ who needed no proof but Himself, and to a Christianity which boldly began with Christ as Christ, without stopping (as it were) to enquire for any better reason than that He was what He was, and came as He came; without looking round to ask how this was philosophically justifiable, or what theology it presupposed. No wonder that the offer seemed to be a godsend: to correspond with penetrating discernment to the exact needs of the time.

How far Ritschlianism answered to and justified these hopes will be seen by those who keep Mr. Edghill's company through these pages. If previously unacquainted with the matter, he will give them the opportunity of forming some estimate. But I think

that those who know more will be glad to review and reconsider the topic with such skilful help as his.

It seems to me that the rise of such a system so fresh, so strong and vital, enlisting the allegiance of minds so various and powerful, at a time when older ways had grown out of use and so many guns had been put out of action, is a marvellous testimony to the permanent and enduring value of the Gospel. I believe that many of the characteristic features of Ritschlianism represent, or at the least point to, advances in a real understanding of the Christian witness which our time has been allowed to make. But this is quite compatible with the conviction, that as a system, and through some of its parts, Ritschlianism, if accepted as the norm of Christian apologetics, would be as one of those reeds upon which if a man lean it pierces his hand. That can be shown in two ways—*à priori*, and by observation of its results. *A priori*, it is one more attempt to cut faith and reason apart; to secure the former by disparaging the latter. It is quite true that Christianity cannot construct a philosophy, nor base itself upon one; but one of its noblest results has been to shed illumination upon the great things of God and man which are the subject matter of speculative thought: and one of the noblest witnesses to it has been that of philosophy. Ritschlianism surely fails from the old fault of treating as worthless what is not complete or demonstrative. Christianity, confident in the truth of the Living God, recognizes in the highest work of the reason a real though imperfect value, and lines of thought converging towards a synthesis which the wisdom of God is alone qualified

to make or understand, and which it were irrational to suppose could be within grasp of the reason of man. Mr. Edghill has pointed out several ways in which Ritschl, the enemy of metaphysics, was metaphysical in spite of himself. Possibly the best instance of all is that he fell into the metaphysician's mistake of contempt for relative or qualified knowledge. An imperfect but aspiring metaphysic, an imperfect but aspiring ethic, an imperfect but advancing knowledge of things visible—Christian faith recognizes them all, learns from all, despises none ; gathers, as it believes, witness, confirmation, and enlargement from all, and so is really in a degree, and wholly in desire, a rational faith.<sup>1</sup> "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

If, on the other hand, we turn to the results, there is the unwelcome but necessary task of pointing out that Ritschlianism issues in an express denial of some of the things which in spiritual practice as well as in theological expression are of the very essence of the Christian faith. That the Gospel should have won from such thinkers as Ritschl and his followers the title of 'the perfect religion' is indeed a splendid and arresting fact of homage to Christ. But our glad and grateful sense of it cannot cause us to entrust ourselves into Ritschl's hands for guidance, when we remember on the one side the havoc which he makes of all the natural evidences of God in creation and the

<sup>1</sup> I might quote, as being to myself instances of what has been said in the text, the relations, independent but deeply indebted, of Christianity to T. H. Green's idealism, to Darwin's revelation of the meaning of process, and to the positive side of Mill's *Utilitarianism*, with its stimulus to social effort, and its practical insistence upon the principle of love.



heart of man, and on the other side discern (by the help of Mr. Edghill's able summary in his final paragraphs), what Ritschl has surrendered of the things that are most essential to the truth of the Gospel and to its power.

EDW. SOUTHWARK.



## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE progress of thought in recent times has necessitated a corresponding advance in theology, if the kingdom is not to be taken from her and given to another. Science has swept aside scholasticism, and reason, it is claimed, has discredited religion. Yet theology, the queen of the sciences, refuses to abdicate, and hears unmoved the lamentations of those that mourn. For, many a time, if the figure may be allowed, has she attended her own obsequies; and many a time also witnessed her own resurrection.

In the beginning, religion grasped reason by the hand, and they two went on together; though young reason had at times hard work to keep pace with her swiftly striding sister (for in those days religion did the pulling). In more modern times reason has rushed ahead, but religion will not release her hold. She has grown somewhat old with the passing of the centuries; and, the experience of ages suggesting caution, she moves somewhat slowly; yea, she halts as she goes. Be not unequally yoked, is a sound saying; and many demanded that the partnership should be dissolved. "Let go my hand," cries reason, impetuous to explore undiscovered and even forbidden realms. "Let her then go, to self-destruction, if she will," suggest many that would not see religion

ruined. "Stop before it is too late; for you know not to what abyss you are being hurried along, to perish evermore." Yet timorous counsels have not prevailed; and still religion grasps reason by the hand, and refuses to disclaim relationship. This situation, however, is well-nigh impossible; some *modus vivendi* must be found, but who shall discover it?

Then rose Ritschl and chode with her. "What! wilt thou always cling to another? Hast thou not power in thyself? Art thou not conscious of self-sufficient life within, for thy sufficiency is of God? Why needest thou this constant comradeship? Why claim an unfounded, and harmful relationship? Why cling on, hindering and hindered? Rise in thy God-given strength: address thyself to thy task and redeem the world. Let reason fly withersoever she will (if independent, yet grateful for release), over the shoreless sea of speculation. But thy call is clear."

Religion, however, is yet reluctant to leave reason: and it is well. Notwithstanding, Ritschlianism is an earnest endeavour to face and to solve the religious difficulty of the present day. It will be the object of this essay to examine how far it has succeeded in its enterprise.

The materials for a study of this new theology are abundant; the author has consulted the following works:

ALBRECHT RITSCHL.—Die christliche Lehre von der Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung, 3 vols. 1st edition 1870, 4th edition 1895. English translation by various scholars of the third German edition (identical with the fourth).

Unterricht in der Christlichen Religion (a most useful and compendious summary of Ritschlian teaching). 6th edition 1903.



Theologie und Metaphysik, 2nd edition 1887.

Schleiermacher's Reden.

Drei Akademischen Reden.

W. HERRMANN.—Der Verkehr des Christen mit Gott. 2nd edition 1892 ; 6th edition 1908. (English translations, both of second and third editions.)

Die Metaphysik in der Theologie.

Die Religion in Verhältniss zum Welterkennen und zur Sittlichkeit.

JULIUS KAFTAN.—Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma ?

Die Wahrheit der christlichen Religion.

Das Wesen der christlichen Religion.

ADOLF HARNACK.—What is Christianity ?

History of Dogma.

OTTO RITSCHL.—Albrecht Ritschl's Leben.

Ueber Werthurtheile.

KÄHLER.—Die Wissenschaft der christlichen Lehre.

The above-mentioned works may be considered as "sources"; the following are rather expository or critical, and have also been consulted with profit :

ECKE.—Die Theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschl's und die Evangelische Kirche der Gegenwart.

STÄHLIN.—Kant, Lotze und Ritschl (mainly philosophical).

KATTENBUSCH.—Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl (an admirable introduction).

LIPSIUS.—Die Ritschl'sche Theologie.

PFLEIDERER.—Die Ritschl'sche Theologie kritisch beleuchtet (excellent, but most unfavourable).

Development of Theology.

FRANK.—Zur Theologie A. Ritschl's.

SCHEIBE.—Die Bedeutung der Werthurtheile.

REISCHLE.—Ein Wort zur Controverse, etc.

R. M. WENLEY.—Contemporary Theology and Theism (much too smart).

GARVIE.—The Ritschlian Theology.

H. M. SCOTT.—Nicene Theology.

JAMES ORR.—The Ritschlian Theology and the Evangelical Faith.

Ritschlianism—Essays critical and expository.  
The Christian View of God and the World.

A. SWING.—The Theology of Albert Ritschl.

A. SABATIER.—Religions of Authority and of the Spirit.

The importance of Ritschlianism can hardly be over-estimated; it is a serious and systematic attempt to restate the entire Christian position. Its influence is both wide and deep; and in no sense whatever confined to the land of its birth. By way of conflict or defence it has set many minds a-thinking: and such labours have contributed largely to the fresh understanding of Christian experience and Christian theology. Moreover, its principles, often unrecognized, and perhaps more often unacknowledged, lie at the root of many powerful tendencies in modern religious thought.

It is perhaps characteristic of the difference between the religious interests of Englishmen and Continentals, that while all Germany was recently divided into hostile camps concerning Ritschl, England was simultaneously distracted with controversies about ritual. The centre of interest has now shifted, and we can spare time to attend to, and discuss, the claims of the Ritschlian theology, which in one form or another is making great headway in this country, where anything that tends to the discredit of systematic and speculative theology may be sure of a ready welcome.

Starting, then, with the cry of a theology without metaphysics, Ritschlianism found a glad response in many hearts. Driven from this untenable position by arguments impossible to withstand, it took refuge in the alluring promise of a religion without theology. This was succeeded by much subtle discrimination between facts of faith and facts for faith, but those who will not be deceived by the voice of the charmer will find the truest description of this new theology as an elaborate and elusive system of faith without facts.

The almost overwhelming pressure of continual and exacting engagements made me well nigh despair of ever being able to compile a satisfactory index to this book. Miss Baily, of Purley, Surrey, most kindly came to my aid; and it is a pleasant obligation to acknowledge the sympathetic discrimination and careful industry with which she set herself to compile an index which will contribute very materially to the usefulness of this book.

The Bishop of Southwark, than whom no one even among the busy bishops of the present day could be busier, has most generously found time to read the proofs and to contribute a preface, for which I am sure all readers of this book will share my gratitude. My own obligations to the Bishop for counsel and encouragement in this as in other matters are so constant and numerous that I despair of ever repaying even the half thereof, but inadequate as is this expression of my gratitude, I could not take the risk of allowing a respectful silence to convey the erroneous impression that I was not deeply appreciative of his kindness.



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# RITSCHLIANISM



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY: KANT, LANGE, AND LOTZE

RITSCHLIANISM has effected a revolution in the sphere of systematic theology. It is not long since the Hegelian philosophy and historical criticism attempted to reconstruct the doctrines of the Christian faith in accordance with their own prepossessions. Now modern empiricism and Neo-Kantism, the avowed antagonists of all speculative philosophy, are striving to remodel Christian dogmatics. The Ritschlian theology has proved by its rapid progress that it is in no sense the arbitrary product of a single mind, but that it represents the prevailing tendencies of the age and is deeply rooted in the theological and religious consciousness of the present day.

Ritschl himself (as we shall have occasion to remark on more than one occasion) lays the very greatest stress upon his theory of cognition, which is the psychological presupposition of all his theology. "Every theologian," he says, "as a scientific man is under the necessity or duty of proceeding in accordance with a definite theory of knowledge, of which he must himself be conscious and the legitimacy of

which he must be prepared to defend." Accordingly it is absolutely necessary for an understanding of the Ritschlian theology to discuss at some length those theories upon which it is avowedly based, that are associated with the names of Kant and Lotze.

Kant tells us that he was awakened out of his dogmatic slumber by Hume. The result of the Humian philosophy was to discredit dogmatism which laid down positions that it was unable to establish, and to bring in a scepticism which seemed to involve the entire extinction of all knowledge. Kant's aim, therefore, was to vindicate the objectivity of human knowledge in opposition to the Humian scepticism and at the same time to insist upon its limitations in opposition to the theories of the dogmatic school. It was Kant's belief that that which gave necessity and objective validity to knowledge was not to be found in the things themselves but in the human mind. Accordingly he undertook a critical examination of the cognitive faculty, and it was upon the theory of knowledge thus established that he bases both his system of ethics and his philosophy of religion.

To proceed, then, with Kant's theory of knowledge, we must learn to distinguish that which our cognitive faculty brings with it and that in the object which exists independently of our knowledge.<sup>1</sup> Our cognitive faculty is itself capable of a double division, into (1) sense, which is the capacity to receive impressions,

<sup>1</sup> A brief résumé of the main presuppositions and conclusions of the Kantian philosophy is necessary to the argument: a fuller discussion of some special points will be found in the additional note at the end of the chapter.



and (2) understanding, the capacity to form concepts. Sense supplies some *a priori* contributions to every act of knowledge, that is, the forms of space and time, while the understanding uses concepts to think objects supplied through sense. These concepts are the categories which do not belong to the things *in themselves*, but to our own faculties of perception and conception. Yet these same categories are universally and necessarily valid, for without them nothing can become an object of knowledge. What then, we ask, remains in the thing? Nothing, but an unknown quantity, which is the cause of our impressions. All knowledge therefore is phenomenal and deals with appearance and not reality; the thing in itself remains as it ever was, entirely outside our knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Kant intended to establish the objective reality of human knowledge, but it is hardly too much to say, that his theory ends in the overthrow of all objective validity. For what we know, and what we can know, according to this theory, is only phenomenal appearance.

In dealing with the phenomenal we must distinguish between matter and form; the matter is

<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to see, if this theory be logically applied, how anything can ever become an object of knowledge, for though the thing itself may be supposed to cause our impressions, yet causality is itself one of the categories. We are thus reduced to an obvious dilemma. The unknown and unknowable *thing in itself* being a cause precedes the categories, but in the fact of being so conceived it becomes subject to the very category of causality which it is supposed to precede. The Kantian theory aims at limiting all human knowledge to phenomena; yet Kant cannot gain the starting-point of his theory without affirming something of the things in themselves which it is the object of this theory to render wholly inaccessible to human reason.

sensation, that is, the impression the thing in itself makes upon our sensitive faculty. The form again is nothing but sensuous intuition or perception as it exists in the ideas of space and time. To quote the words of Kant himself, "the form lies ready *a priori* in the mind." The phenomenal, therefore, exists only in the mind, both as to form and as to content; in other words it is wholly subjective, and may be not a manifestation of the thing in itself at all, but merely a modification of our own consciousness. How then are we to attribute objective reality to our knowledge? It can only be given when the phenomena are brought under the categories which are the necessary forms of all thought. Thus they are combined according to law and consequently acquire universal validity. But the strange part of this theory lies in the fact that when we consider what it is that confers this objective validity we find that it is itself subjective and we are thus reduced to believing that our knowledge can only be composed of "elements or constituents which appertain solely to the subject." The human mind lamenting its own subjectivity and barely able to peep through the prison bars of phenomenalism, must reluctantly abandon its attempt to reach the promised land of objective reality—a land of far distances whereof it is dimly conscious but whose joys it may never taste. Thus speaks Kant himself, "Even if we were to carry our empirical intuition to the highest degree of clearness we should not thereby approach any nearer to a knowledge of the objects considered in themselves. . . . What the objects may be considered in themselves, would never become known to us, even though we should

attain to the clearest possible acquaintance with that which is alone within our reach : viz. their appearance." <sup>1</sup>

This seems to take away all possibility of objective truth in knowledge. The fact that this subjectivity is universal and "necessary" does not obviate the fact of its delusive character, but makes it all the more lamentable.

The Kantian theory of knowledge is in reality a philosophy of agnosticism : and objective reality can only be maintained by directly controverting the principal position on which Kant's *Critique* is based.

Having laid down his epistemological principles, Kant proceeded in his *Transcendental Dialectic* to consider the conceptions of Pure Reason. The understanding concerns itself with finite things under the form of conceptions, and therefore never passes the bounds of empirical possibility. Reason concerns itself with the unconditioned, and therefore arrives at conceptions by way of inference, not of reflection, and deals with ideas which must necessarily and eternally remain beyond experience. Unity is essential for knowledge : so Kant proceeds to discuss the three great ideas of unity—the soul, the world, and God. It follows naturally from Kant's premises by which all real knowledge is limited to experience, that although Kant is prepared to allow them a regulative value, such ideas cannot claim any constitutive validity ; for the human mind is incapable of knowing ultimate truth. At first sight this position seems to tell in favour of the Christian idea of revelation : but

<sup>1</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 59.

a moment's reflection will convince us that no revelation would be possible at all unless the mind were capable of receiving it. The knowledge that revelation gives, must itself be subjected to the laws of knowledge, if it is ever to be appropriated by the human mind. The Kantian philosophy overthrows the objectivity of knowledge by its theory of the fatal deficiency of the human intellect, but thereby makes both revelation and religion *theoretically* impossible. It is needless to pursue the subject at length, through all its psychological and cosmological ramifications, ultimately leading up to the refutation of the traditional theological proofs of the existence of God. Kant's difficulties largely arise from a dualistic conception of consciousness, involving an abstract separation between subject and object. How complicated if not self-contradictory the discussions on free-will and determinism become, may well be imagined. With reference to the theological position, it is only just to say that Kant succeeded in completely overthrowing the usual form in which the arguments of rational theology were stated. But, after all, Kant argued on his own presuppositions; and till these had been tested, the victory could not be pronounced ultimately decisive. Yet for a moment everything was swept away before this imperious onslaught—the soul, human freedom, God Himself: and a blank agnosticism was left to mock the efforts of speculative reason. It was impossible, however, to imagine that metaphysic at a moment of renewed youth should be slain by a single sword; and it is now universally acknowledged that Kantism is in no sense the last word on the subject of metaphysical speculation.

Indeed the necessity for unity of knowledge (such as is guaranteed by a belief in the absolute, whether viewed from a theistic or pantheistic point of view), is not merely a result of a practical impulse but a necessity of the theoretic reason. Otherwise all knowledge is dissolved into doubt, reason into contradiction, and truth into seeming.

Kant's theory of knowledge sets a limit to knowledge which it shall not pass. Led by theoretical reason we arrive at a point, like Israel of old, where the impassable sea rolls in front, the illimitable desert stretches on the further side, and the inexorable foe presses on behind. Flying before the onset of materialism, knowledge finds itself between the sands of doubt and the waves of scepticism. The situation is desperate and nothing but a divine interposition can save. Such a *deus ex machina* Kant finds in his theory of Practical Reason. Theoretical knowledge hems us in on every side, but it is impossible that man can thus live or live content: there must be freedom, scope for development, wide regions of religion and morality, through which the soul may wandering wonder, and wondering worship, and worshipping reign. Kant sees clearly how impossible it is to rest content with the barren delusions of the theoretic reason. So by a *tour de force* the practical reason regains what the theoretic reason had lost, or rather thrown away: and we are introduced to what must ultimately prove to be two realms of reality. In the one, theoretic reason reigns supreme, and thought languishes under its stern despotism; in the other, practical reason gives freedom and erects a spacious edifice, wherein



religion and morality may dwell securely and none make them afraid.

The *Critique of Practical Reason* starts with the idea of a moral law. This is regarded as a fact of reason, which there is no gainsaying. The existence of a moral law which is the determining principle of the will necessitated the assumption of moral liberty. Similarly a will determined by the moral law necessarily seeks the realization of the highest good. The highest good, however, can only be realized by the perfect conformity of the will to the moral law. But this never takes place in the world of sense: hence we are driven to postulate the immortality of the soul. The practical reason is not yet content. The highest good is the combination of virtue and happiness, and this demands that nature should be in harmony with morality. But if this is so, there must be not only a cause of nature outside nature, but a cause which is necessarily a complete manifestation of the perfect moral law. Hence as a necessary postulate of the practical reason, we must assume the existence of God.

So all things are restored that were lost—freedom, immortality, God. And these great doctrines, freed evermore from the fluctuating speculations of theoretical philosophy, are exalted to the unassailable heights of moral certainty. But we are not permitted to ascribe to these things any theoretic value. As Kant himself says, more than once: "We can only think the Supreme Being; we cannot know him or ascribe anything theoretically to him." The proof of God's existence rests in no sense whatever on demonstration, but solely and entirely on the practical

postulates of the moral consciousness. Kant, indeed, seeks to maintain the objective reality of the three great conceptions to which we have alluded, but emphatically denies the possibility of their ever becoming objects of theoretic knowledge. Under these circumstances, however, it is really impossible to assert their objective truth.

Kant's anxiety to defend the apriority and originality of the moral law leads him to assert "the autonomy of the will as the sole principle of moral laws and their corresponding duties." Stated otherwise, the obligatoriness of the moral law is to be found in the moral constitution of human nature, and in no sense in its correspondence with, and manifestation of, a perfect will of absolute good, wholly independent of man, and serving as the standard to which all ideals of morality must conform. It may be granted, and Kant has proved it well, that the moral law is a fact of our reason. But this proves no more than it states; and then we must hold our peace. The postulates of the practical reason are thus no more than hypotheses and assumptions based upon our moral consciousness, and the necessary presupposition of man's moral activity : they can in no sense whatever be said to be characterized by objective necessity or truth. Starting from the necessity of the subject, rather than that of the object, they may indeed maintain their position as real constituents of human nature, but only to be rapidly dissolved into complete relativity.

By far the greatest difficulty of the Kantian theory of knowledge has yet to be examined—the complete separation of the theoretic and practical

reason. Such a separation it would be hard to justify, save as a theoretical distinction conveniently drawn for the purposes of the critical examination of elements recognized to be essentially inseparable. This, however, is in no sense the meaning of Kant. For him the two realms of knowledge are not merely distinct, but mutually exclusive ; and mutual exclusion may at any time pass into avowed hostility. The unity of knowledge is practically sacrificed ; for there seems no possible method by which the *a priori* moral law, a form of the practical intelligence, can ever become subject to the categories of the understanding. How then can the moral law ever become an object of knowledge, unless the former or the latter abandon their peculiar characteristics ? It almost seems as if the principles of theoretic knowledge compel us to deny the possibility of the practical postulates ever becoming an object of knowledge or thought, or, indeed, having any real existence.

It need hardly be said that this result in no way corresponds with Kant's intention. His fundamental antithesis between the two realms of knowledge has a very different object, that of setting religious truths free from all fear of philosophical assaults. Theoretic knowledge being limited to phenomena and never attaining to the things in themselves which are the pattern of the true, the reason could no longer claim absolute supremacy. A fair field was left for faith : for where knowledge is, faith is done away : but where knowledge is not, there faith can be active ; for faith is the evidence of things not seen, nor known, nor understood. Knowledge may even be regarded as the fount of unbelief : and the

Kantian philosophy, by demonstrating the subjectivity and insecurity of knowledge, claimed to have cut off the waters of that fountain for ever. Reason was dethroned and faith declared triumphant. But the victory was too dearly purchased; for faith and knowledge are so closely interwoven the one with the other, that when one perishes the other pines. By reducing all knowledge to phenomena, faith itself became nothing but subjective presentation; and in this overthrow of reason religion is itself overthrown.

The theory of knowledge which Kant elaborated is the pivot of the Ritschlian theology, and, speaking generally, it is quite impossible to understand the religious thought of the nineteenth century, without a thorough appreciation of the principles and presuppositions of the Kantian philosophy. Its theory of knowledge dominated many minds and many schools: but in other directions also it was not without far-reaching influences, some of which we may briefly indicate.

(i) The critical philosophy marks a real stage in the advance of thought in its relation both to empiricism and dogmatism. The scepticism of Hume furnishes an historical illustration of the ultimate resting place of philosophical empiricism. Kant attacked this negative conclusion through the premises; and established the transcendental spontaneity of the human mind. He vindicated the truth and certainty of the categories, and the right of reason to form its own laws.

(ii) Even more important was the overthrow of dogmatism, which aimed at demonstrating the

ultimate identity of truth and being. While not quarrelling with the conclusion (which is inevitable for any systematic unity of thought) Kant rightly demonstrated the inadequacy of the methods by which it was reached. By Kant's masterly explication of the idea of reason, the old metaphysic was not only discredited but practically destroyed.

(iii) In vindicating the originality of a moral law, Kant shook off the fetters of empiricism and materialism. These latter made common cause in attempting to reduce morality to the social and physical causes of environment and heredity. Kant's assertion of the "categorical imperative" as no empirical growth in society nor any result of custom or education, but as an essential factor in the inmost constitution of the human mind, raised human feeling above the mechanical and material theories which sought to deny this fundamental attribute of humanity.

(iv) Kant's real greatness lies in the fact that he inaugurated a tremendous and lasting revolution in the world of thought. Ritschl himself states with force and directness the great problem of human existence. "Man as a spiritual being on the one hand, makes the claim to be of greater worth than the whole natural system; and, on the other, finds himself limited, hemmed in, and subjected by the latter."<sup>1</sup> This difficulty was felt most acutely towards the close of the eighteenth century: the problem was how to reconcile freedom and dependence. Practically, the question had been settled; for freedom was denied. Doctrines and institutions,

<sup>1</sup> *Drei akademische Reden*, p. 10; cf. *R.V.* iii. 199.

political and ecclesiastical, were decorous and dead ; for the spirit which gives life had fled to seek a more congenial home. Forces moved beneath the surface—volcanic forces of terrific power : forces and fires the more violent because the longer suppressed. These fierce desires were awhile inarticulate : it was Kant who first gave them conscious and reasoned expression. The Kantian philosophy represents the rebellion of the human spirit, against the lifeless externalism which threatened to crush the soul out of existence. Kant reiterated with emphasis the necessary and original freedom of the human mind : and so doing voiced the passionate protest of the human spirit against those soulless forces by which it seemed at times that it must be inevitably overwhelmed. In this respect the critical philosophy marks a turning point in the history of freedom, progress, and religion.

(v) We may in conclusion glance at the manner in which specifically Christian doctrines are treated by Kant, especially as not a few have in this form been taken over into the Ritschlian theology. Kant's conception of the highest good led him to conceive the world as a teleological system, and to postulate its moral government by God. The issue would result in the realization of a universal fellowship of men bound together by the laws of virtue ; or, in other words, a consummation of humanity in the Kingdom of God. In his *Religion within the Limits of Reason*, Kant somewhat alters his earlier point of view : for, while in the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant deduced the idea of the Kingdom of God from the idea of God himself, as



the supremely moral Being, in his later work he bases his deduction on man's need of moral fellowship by which ultimate victory is to be secured. Ritschl himself exhibits many changes of opinion, but he remains constant in asserting that here we have "Kant's weightiest thought for theology." Thus, in the first edition of his monumental work he claims that "This teleological interpretation of the system of the world, derived from the valuation of fellowship in action, according to moral law as the final aim of the world, stands in direct analogy to the Christian view of the world";<sup>1</sup> while in the third he again declares that "a judgment of the moral destination of men which attaches itself to Kant's fundamental position serves as the ground of knowledge for the validity of the Christian idea of God as solution of the problem of the world."<sup>2</sup>

(vi) Kant's doctrine of human freedom was of the utmost importance to any doctrinal system which nucleated itself round the great ideas of justification and atonement. As part of the phenomenal world, man is under the laws of natural necessity: as part of the noumenal world, of realities, reason prescribed to itself its own laws, and man is thus free. These ideas were appropriated by Ritschl, in whose hands they received systematic enlargement and theological interpretation. "The high importance of Kant's contribution to the right understanding of the Christian idea of reconciliation lies less in any positive contribution to the structure of the doctrine than in the fact that he established critically—that is, with scientific strictness—those general presuppositions of

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii<sup>1</sup>. 13-15.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii<sup>3</sup>. 215.

the idea of reconciliation, which lie in the consciousness of moral freedom and moral guilt." <sup>1</sup> And again, in reference to the Kantian system, Ritschl declares, "A sharply marked and continued consciousness of guilt without which the whole Christian idea of reconciliation is unintelligible, becomes methodically possible only when we judge ourselves after the idea of transcendental freedom." <sup>2</sup>

(vii) One feature of Kant's theory of the objective character of guilt brought him into sharp antagonism with the Illuminist Theologians. The latter held a view of Divine punishment, which cannot be more finely or more tersely expressed than in the noble words of Clement of Alexandria, *Unto salvation and reform and conversion are the punishments of God*. Kant, followed by Ritschl, on the other hand, maintains strongly the retributive as opposed to the reformatory character of Divine justice, and sees in the former, rather than in the latter, the essential meaning of punishment. "From the idea of our practical reason which sets the transgression of the moral law in the light of guilt, it follows also that transgression deserves punishment." <sup>3</sup> It is difficult to bring Ritschl's later views into harmony with his early and emphatic approval of Kant's position in this respect, but at first its anti-mystical tendencies strongly appealed to him. "Herein Kant's opposition to the Illuminist treatment of the idea of punishment holds firm ground, and in itself the thought is one of undoubted truth." <sup>4</sup>

We may now take leave of Kant: our all too brief

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* i. 408.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 394.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 417.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 417.

examination, or rather indication, of his main positions will have made it clear how powerful a stimulus they afforded to thought, and how profoundly the philosophical conclusions of this great thinker modified all subsequent attempts at systematic religious reflection. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that the Kantian philosophy necessitated not merely a restatement, but a reconstruction of traditional theology.

A few words must be added on the subsequent development of the Kantian philosophy by those who are generally described as Neo-Kantians. The prevailing distaste for metaphysics, the disillusionment consequent on the break-down of the speculative movement of the first half of the nineteenth century, the triumph of the experimental sciences, all combined to produce a reaction of which "Back to Kant" was the watchword and battle-cry. For Kant's theory of knowledge secured two things—the existence and the unknowableness of the thing in itself. The latter sets science free to pursue its own course, unhampered by metaphysical or theological interference: while the assertion of the former left open a wide region for religious feeling and imagination. Thus Materialists and Idealists both united in the demand for a return to Kant.

The chief representative of this tendency is Lange, whose *History of Materialism* is recognized as the fullest and ablest exposition of the principles of the Neo-Kantian School. Lange practically abolishes the thing in itself: he certainly denies its objective reality. It can only be affirmed as an epistemological category. We cannot know whether the

thing in itself exists; all we can say is that the conception of any true nature of things is "nothing more or less than the progeny of an antithesis (between the thing in itself and the phenomenon) posited by our organization, with regard to which we are ignorant whether it has any significance whatever relatively to that which is outside us."<sup>1</sup> From the physiological experiments on the organs of sense, Lange concludes that sense and understanding can no longer be treated as separate. Accordingly for Pure Reason he substitutes "physico-psychical organization." Here then we seem to have drifted into thorough-going materialism; but we are violently plucked out of the vortex into which we are sinking, and are landed in the syrtes of idealism. For Lange's philosophy is no naïve materialism, but critical materialism. He does not attribute reality to matter: on the contrary he insists on its phenomenal character. It is difficult to admit the success of this curious synthesis of discordant elements: Proteus-like Lange's philosophy now appears idealistic, now changes rapidly and inexplicably into a materialistic form.

If this is the result of Kant's theoretic philosophy, we cannot be surprised at the overthrow of his practical system. "The entire practical philosophy," says Lange, "is the mutable and transitory part of his system . . . The whole significance of the great reform inaugurated by Kant must rather be sought in his *Critique* of the theoretical reason." Even with regard to our knowledge of ourselves, the conclusion is drawn with resistless logical force that "the corner-

<sup>1</sup> Lange, *op. cit.* ii. 57.

stone of the *Critique of Reason* is that we do not know ourselves as we are, but merely as we appear to ourselves."

Our knowledge, then, is wholly limited to the phenomenal, and though the human mind longs to reach transcendental truth, it is an endless journey, a hopeless task. What, then, becomes of religion?<sup>1</sup> There is a choice between two alternatives.

(i) Its function should be transferred to science and to art; but this might involve spiritual impoverishment, and might even provoke fanatical reaction.

(ii) By penetrating to the *kernel* of religion, we can consciously rise above the actual, thereby vanquishing fanaticism and superstition, and at the same time abandoning for ever the attempt to falsify the actual by means of the mythical. The kernel of religion must not be sought in certain doctrines which are incapable of withstanding the solvent powers of criticism—the end whereof is complete negation; but in the elements of the soul above the actual where it can have the promise of a spiritual home.

Religion is really a product of phantasy, a free creation of the imagination; and its value lies in its ethical, not in its logical substance.

Kant set bounds to reason to make room for faith; Neo-Kantism would abolish faith to make room for religion. But it is only on one condition. Religion must freely own itself poetry, not reality; relative, not absolute; subjective, not objective. She must not adorn herself in truth's stolen feathers lest her nakedness appear, and she become a laughing-stock

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lange, ii. 546, 547.

for all mankind. But dwelling in the region of phantasy, she is secure from the attacks of science and the doubts of philosophy. Indeed, religious ideas will thus be strengthened. Their theoretic truth is destroyed, but their practical value is enhanced. Even the self-created illusions of religious belief may be both beautiful and beneficial.

But the scepticism and illusionism whither Neo-Kantism leads is no haven where we would be ; nor can we think that Truth is a seemly sacrifice for Illusion's altar, even though by some unexplained means a more suitable victim at the last moment takes her place, and she is preserved, like Iphigeneia of old, to continue her life in some far distant shrine, removed from the haunts of men. Illusion, that is conscious illusion, can neither claim to possess true beauty nor to confer lasting benefits.

It must not be supposed that Neo-Kantism has not fulfilled a valuable service in the development of human thought. Against empiricism it insisted on *a priori* constituents of human knowledge ; against neo-dogmatism it insisted upon a scientific examination of fundamental presuppositions. Neo-Kantism is, therefore, a true starting-point for further advance, but cannot claim to have reached the goal of all philosophical reflection.

We must finally examine the outlines of Lotze's philosophy—for though the most diverse critics are agreed in regarding Ritschl as a Neo-Kantian, he himself emphatically repudiates the Kantian epistemology, and declares his adhesion to Lotze.<sup>1</sup>

We may perhaps, in passing, mention that Lotze

<sup>1</sup> *Theologie und Metaphysik*, passim. R.V. iii. 19.

himself took a very different view as to the place of epistemological considerations in constructive theology than that which Ritschl advocates. The latter, it will be remembered, definitely laid down that every scientific theologian must proceed in accordance with a clear theory of knowledge, the legitimacy of which he must be prepared to defend. Lotze, however, considered any such preliminary investigation into the psychological conditions of the origin of knowledge as "wholly unwarranted" and "essentially unsound, if the purpose is to build upon that most obscure of all problems any metaphysical system; on the contrary, these problems themselves have necessitated the discovery of fresh methods of solution."<sup>1</sup>

It is important, therefore, to realize the position that Lotze's theory of cognition holds to the rest of his philosophical system. It is not as with Kant the fundamental presupposition, but the natural outcome of his philosophy.

Lotze agreed with scientific empiricism in assuming an infinite multiplicity of simple beings which constitute the sensual world; with Spinoza he believed in the substantial unity of all being; with Plato in the idea of the infinitely good. Thus he maintains that the multiplicity of 'reals' is embraced in an absolute substance, in one infinite being, of which they are really nothing but the modifications. Nevertheless, their independence necessitates their being thought of as soul-like beings in which the infinite being is spiritually immanent.

Lotze therefore controverts Kant's theory of knowledge, for though he held with Kant that the

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, *Metaphysik*, 15.



world of science is phenomenal, he yet maintained the possibility of the things in themselves being the object of theoretic thought.

Having thus shown how far a rational view of the world was susceptible of theoretic demonstration, he proceeds to contrast and compare it with the independent sphere of moral and religious truth. In this realm the mind has its own ideals; and as it is impossible that these, which are the most valuable products of the human mind, springing from its innate capacity for the appreciation of real worth, can be mere illusions, he postulates for them an actual existence. Thus, ethical good conceived as all-personal is exalted to the throne of the universe, and is crowned both by the theoretic thought and the religious consciousness.

This idea of good is finally identified with the conception of the living love of the living God, from which is deduced a grand spiritual and teleological view of the whole world as leading to eternal blessedness.

It remains to indicate those two directions in which the teaching of Lotze exercised the greatest influence.

(i) Ritschl sums up Lotze's theory of knowledge in the following words: "He holds that in the phenomena, which in a limited space exhibit changes to a limited extent and in a definite order, we recognize the thing as the cause of its qualities operating upon us, as the end which they serve as means, as the law of their constant changes."<sup>1</sup> Plato and Kant, in Ritschl's estimate, are both in

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 19, 20.

error in separating the thing in itself from its attributes and activities. Lotze's theory makes no such separation, so that we can state that the thing may be known in its phenomena.

Thus while Kant would consider the knowledge of the things in themselves, were it attainable, as a higher form of knowledge than that which we have, Lotze holds that the things are only the means to produce those representations which we actually possess, and that therefore the higher knowledge consists "rather in tracing the meaning bond and laws of the phenomena than in pursuing anxiously beyond the power of thought the means by which the latter are produced."

Notwithstanding, Ritschl's refusal to treat the phenomena as anything other than subjective appearances, and his curious suggestion about the origin of the thing in itself as a memory picture of repeated intuitions, does not take us much further than the Kantian doctrine of the unknowableness of the things in themselves. But to this we must refer later.

(ii) Lotze consistently maintained a sharp distinction (capable of ultimate reconciliation) between the religious consciousness and theoretic philosophy. Man has a faculty for *judging according to worth*. With this capacity he is originally endowed, and through it he becomes conscious of a world of values, as well as of a world of forms. This world of values, the true sphere of religious consciousness, has needs and ideals, and even a language of its own quite distinct from those of the merely intellectual view of the world. There can be no question that

Lotze's theory of these two types of representation directly paved the way for the doctrine of value-judgment, which plays so conspicuous a part in the Ritschlian theology.

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE.

Another problem that suggests itself is the origin of sensation. Kant would ascribe this to the thing in itself, but it is plain that this cannot be empirically deduced, for experience itself can only arise when phenomena are brought under the categories of the understanding. Pure experience will not help us to discover whether the thing in itself can have any existence independently of our own consciousness. In other words, we cannot tell whether the things have transcendental or merely empirical reality. "Properly speaking, I cannot perceive external things: I can merely infer their existence from my inner perception by treating this latter as an effect, of which something external is the nearest cause."<sup>1</sup> But this inference is problematical in the extreme, owing to the possibility of the plurality of causes, and consequently our perceptions of external things may be nothing but modes of representation or modifications of our own consciousness. There seems no doubt that a legitimate inference from Kant's language in his first edition of the *Critique* would be that he left the existence of the thing in itself as a wholly open question; but in his second edition was added the much disputed *Refutation of Idealism*. The account Kant himself gives of this passage is that it was intended to clear up the obscurities of his former statements and to obviate consequent misunderstanding. Kuno Fischer, perhaps the greatest scholar in matters Kantian,

<sup>1</sup> *Critique of Pure Reason*, 1st edition, p. 367.

prefers the original form of the doctrine, which he considers to be a genuine representation of Kant's meaning. He holds that the later editions blunt the force of the idealism with which, as a matter of fact, the *Critique of Pure Reason* is bound up. "The Critique, in its first form, was the Critique from Kant's own point of view: in its subsequent form it was the Critique from the point of view of the Kantians."<sup>1</sup> The Kantian philosophy exercised a strong power of attraction for many minds: yet the philosophy which resolved all phenomena into mere mental representations could never permanently secure the enthusiastic advocacy of any large number of converts. The dogmatic mind demanded as a condition of its acceptance of the Kantian philosophy a single concession which however seeming slight yet was a surrender of the crucial point. The limits of the human understanding suggested an adequate explanation of the unknowability of the ultimate meaning of phenomena. Kant was prepared to accept the inevitable. In the second edition we are confronted with a realistic modification of his original view, the logical consequence of which was plainly in irreconcilable conflict with the main presuppositions both in regard to the thing and to the thinking subject underlying his whole work. The fact is that Kant, dreading lest he should be drawn into the vortex of metaphysical idealism, threw over some of his elementary principles to save his philosophy, which yet had to cling to them for the support elsewhere denied.

Thus Kant refutes idealism yet lands us in inevitable scepticism as to the things in themselves. Have they real existence or no? Kant leads us to uncertain inferences and insoluble doubts. Berkeley, against whom the *Refutation of Idealism* was chiefly aimed, was more thorough-

<sup>1</sup> Kuno Fischer, *Geschichte*, etc. iii. 444.

going: "What conclusion can determine us to assume the existence of bodies outside the mind as the ground of that which we perceive, seeing that not even do the advocates of the doctrine of matter maintain that there is any necessary connection between bodies and our ideas?"

Kant attempts to answer this question, but succeeds only in repeating it. For the whole essence of Kant's famous criticism of the ontological proof of God's being is the inadmissibility of passing from idea to reality. Kant severed the thing in itself wholly and entirely from the phenomenon: the two are in no wise related as two aspects of the same object, nor is the thing in itself the phenomenon stripped of sensuous representation. For the phenomenon stripped of its sensuous character vanishes into the empty air. Between the phenomenon and the thing in itself a great gulf is fixed: nor is there any possibility of passing from one to the other, even for those who would fain do so. The thing in itself must therefore remain theoretically incognoscible forever. But if so, how can the existence of the thing be justifiably maintained? For all existence must be determined, nor can being be separated from the mode of being.

Kant indeed declares that the thing in itself is merely a limitative conception of exclusively negative use; it is therefore "Noumenon" as opposed to that which is empirically given. But even here we are not free from a crowd of inconsistencies. The thing can only be thought under the form of the categories which control all thought; and yet the categories are inapplicable to anything that lies beyond the phenomenon. The thing in itself cannot be known: nor can it be thought. And we may well ask how can the unthinkable exist?

The trend of the Kantian philosophy inevitably involves the abolition of the thing in itself. What then becomes

of the distinction between the thing in itself and the phenomenon, on the basis of which distinction the entire edifice of Kant's theory of knowledge, as well as his practical philosophy, has been erected? Historically Fichte carried Kantism to the only logically legitimate conclusion, when he represented the thing in itself as merely the non-ego; not in the sense of anything actually independent of the ego, but as a self-positing limit of our own consciousness. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the principles of the Kantian system demand a suppression of its presuppositions.

The Kantian theory of knowledge seems to terminate in complete subjectivism, if not in solipsism, and tends to the entire overthrow of all objective knowledge. It may be answered that we can predicate actual existence of the many finite consciousnesses which compose the human race. But it is difficult to see on these philosophical principles what relation the human race can bear to the individual consciousness other than as a species of subjective representation. Yet it was on the assumption that reason was common to all the members of the human race that Kant asserted the necessity and universal validity of human knowledge. But if the human race may itself be a subjective representation, how then can human knowledge acquire objective validity?

Kant set out to vindicate the objectivity of human knowledge: he sought a sure foundation; but he has built his house upon the sands. The quicksands of subjectivity would have indeed swallowed him up quick, but he was himself saved by the inconsistencies which destroyed his system. For, in spite of much self-contradiction, it was always a fundamental thought of the Kantian philosophy that beyond the confines of experience lay another region vague and dim, *possible* only to specu-

lation, but capable of independent justification as a matter of faith.

Kant's theory made the thing in itself absolutely indeterminate and indeterminable, and wholly disconnected with the phenomenon. The inconsistencies and self-contradictions which beset this position, do not merely indicate its weakness, but suggest a possible answer.

Kant's failure to establish his position shows the lines along which a reconstruction must be attempted. The distinction between the phenomenon and the thing in itself is an impossible abstraction. Kant would fain drive us to an unjustifiable alternative. If with Hume we suppose that the categories are derived from experience, we must deny their aprioristic and necessary character; if on the other hand with the Rationalists we regard them as conditioning all possible experience, he would have us assert that they are only determinations of the mind, and therefore possess nothing more than subjective value. This however is a false dilemma. If in the mind, not in the things, says Kant; and therewith destroys the possibility of objective knowledge. The reply is easy. If in the mind then also in the things. If the categories are only conceivable in the understanding, then there must be some necessary correspondence between the knowing mind and the known things. In other words, the existence of the categories in the understanding points to the existence of an understanding independent of our minds in the things also.



## CHAPTER II

### SCHLEIERMACHER AND THE ROMANTIC SCHOOL

THE nineteenth century marks a well-defined period in the history of religion. The extraordinary revival of philosophy—whether rational or experiential—had given rise to a series of questions of universal import. The sciences were rapidly emerging from the subordinate position they had hitherto been content to hold, and threatened to sweep all metaphysical speculation off the field. What should be the attitude of the Church amid prevailing uncertainty and intellectual unrest? Would she adapt herself to her new environment? Would she abate her exclusive claims? Would she descend from the clouds and mingle among men to raise them to heaven; or would she remain inaccessible to the new demands of human reason? The question was one of pressing importance; perhaps more so in Protestant than in Catholic circles, for the former possessed no such logical and self-enclosed theory of infallible authority as the latter. It was seen that the earlier method of Protestantism was doomed, but what was there to put in its place? The answer to this question was given by Schleiermacher, who set himself in his two great works—the *Discourses*

on Religion and the *Doctrine of Christian Faith*—to restate theology in the terms of the new learning. Such restatement was sorely needed ; and just at the psychical moment appeared Schleiermacher's monumental work, in which all the tendencies of the expiring century were woven into a kind of unity, while the trend of thought thus set in motion is yet operative in the present day. The abiding service that Schleiermacher rendered to religion was his deliberate undertaking to systematize theology. His masterly work—*Die Glaubenslehre*—grasped the idea of a system and developed its significance : his entire outlook is dominated by the conception of a whole in dogmatics. He will have no peace with the popular theology of the day which reposes upon fragmentary "passages" of Scripture. Calvin, it is true, had bequeathed to the orthodox theologians of the reformed school distinctly systematic tendencies ; not only by the impress of his own masterful personality but also as the necessary outcome of his conception of the elect community in whose redemption the whole of God's world-plan is accomplished. Lutheranism, with no such stimulus to a systematic theology, tended more and more to become pure traditionalism. Orthodoxy proved a dour mistress. The Scriptures, from which a connected view of Christian theology was to be drawn, had at all costs to be preserved entire. Orthodoxy appointed and approved the material, and even if some parts of the material should be flagrantly out of harmony with the rest of the building, they must not be discarded as superfluous but retained as being of quite special value. The authority of Scripture,

supported by the dogma of plenary inspiration, was employed to give ample shelter to the unintelligible and even to the irrational—which by an extraordinary perversion both of faith and reason was supposed to contain a special manifestation of the supernatural and to be the special object of veneration among the mysteries of the faith. The tendency of modern Lutheranism even among the theologians of the confessional (or orthodox) school to shake off the shackles of tradition and to elaborate a constructive and systematic theology is wholly due to the influence of Schleiermacher, who was really the first to apply the modern scientific spirit to the study of dogmatic religion.

Schleiermacher, then, inaugurated a new era in theology by his systematic restatement of Christian dogmatics. It is in his conception and development of a systematic whole in religion that his real originality is revealed. But his conspicuous and enduring services in this respect were only made possible by a new view as to the origin of dogma. “Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona”: and Herder, to mention no other names, had anticipated Schleiermacher in maintaining the distinction between faith and doctrine, religion and theology. The latter, however, was the first to make this distinction a real and determining factor in his treatment of theology. For the new rationalism *in essence* differed but little from the old theology, in that both conceived religion as the assent to certain dogmatic propositions. Orthodoxy naturally fastened on the scriptural dogmas formulated in the creeds and ecclesiastical confessions as the essential propositions of Christian

faith. Rationalism while reducing these essentials to far smaller proportions nevertheless demanded assent to its own propositions. These might be conceived as natural truths and might claim the support of Scripture : but the fact remains that while rationalism and orthodoxy differed profoundly as to the real essentials of Christian faith, they both agreed in assuming some such essentials, and in demanding assent to their own propositions as the only valid basis of religion. The whole and the only point in dispute between the two may be narrowed down to the amount of things necessary to be believed and the exact position of reason in theology. Schleiermacher broke with both schools : indeed, he showed little patience with either. In their place he substituted his well known theory—religion is neither knowledge nor action, but feeling ;—and dogma is the expression of the inner significance of this religious feeling. Hereby dogma was deprived of all external and adventitious authority. Such authority as dogma continued to possess was derived solely from its character as the necessary expression of the religious consciousness. In this connection Schleiermacher joined issue with the Rationalists : for their exaltation of reason as man's highest power led them to seek the truth of this thought in a kind of abstract independent self-sufficiency which ultimately sacrificed man's really highest power, the ability to initiate new departures in life and history. Rationalism by a kind of false isolation spoke of the qualities inherent in mankind, as in the abstract. With this abstraction Schleiermacher shows himself wholly unsympathetic. He knows nothing of human beings *qua* human beings ;

but of human beings definitely and historically characterized. Similarly in his view there is no such thing as abstract religion but only concrete religions ; that is to say, religion is never actually realized save in a variety of individual and independent religious fellowships. Every religion has its strongly marked individual characteristics, largely historically determined : and every religious faith must have reference to its own religious fellowship. We may, in passing, refer to Ritschl's appreciation of the importance of this conception. He considers it one of the most important truths taught by Schleiermacher "whereby he has given a new aspect primarily to ethics, and secondarily to theology ; and has risen above the field of vision both of the Kantian and Wolfian schools." Schleiermacher will have nothing to do with the *natural* religion of rationalism, nor with its thesis that all religions are ultimately the same and that their historical peculiarities are of little or no account. On the contrary he insists with vehemence that it is only from within the religious community, only in the faith and fellowship of a definite Church, that it is possible to arrive at any distinction between the essential and the accidental features of a religious body : and that, in drawing such a distinction, the definite historical characteristics must be taken as absolutely determinative.

Schleiermacher's reduction of religion to feeling needs further amplification. The particular form of feeling is characterized as a sense of *dependence*. The feeling may, of course, be undeveloped or even misdirected, but where it exists in a pure and healthy form, there exists also true religion. The

feeling arises in this manner. Our conception of the world does not give us the realization of the highest values. There is not the immediate harmony which we naturally desiderate between the explanation and evaluation of existence. As a result of this discord between the valuable and the actual, man sets himself in earnest to see to it, that whatever happens the former shall be preserved. Were man omnipotent, no difficulty would be felt nor would any religious feeling necessarily arise. But the reverse is the case. In his struggle for the preservation of value, man finds himself perpetually opposed and constantly thwarted. It is here that religion comes to the rescue, for there arises that feeling of dependence upon an ultimate reality in which value and existence are harmoniously united.

Schleiermacher's scheme is certainly open to the suspicion of pantheistic tendencies. Each man, nay every being, is a microcosmos, enshrining and repeating in itself the powers and problems of the universe. When this secret of existence has been apprehended, when the relation between the individual and the universe has been realized, then comes this feeling of dependence, in other words the origin of true religion. When we come to press the question on what exactly man depends, the answer is, on God. But God is not apparently conceived in His transcendental relation to and above the world, but merely as a convenient symbol, a kind of "Whereon" to round off the idea of dependence. Schleiermacher himself protested against any such deductions from his teaching: and it may be inferred from his writings that while laying stress on the immanence of God as

the principle of universal order, he is yet prepared in the idea of a universe to separate though not to sever the world from God. It may be asked (as indeed it has been, not once nor twice) of what value this doctrine of dependence can be to the human mind. Would not the constant recollection of our bonds, the continual remembrance of our limitations, fetter all free development and progress? Can religion do no more for us, save to oppress us with a melancholy insistence on our own powerlessness? Schleiermacher's answer must be found in his conception of the world. To him, as to Goethe, the world in nature and in history is one vast drama in which each man, each thing, has an important and even indispensable part to play. All is a manifestation of perfect and supreme intelligence. From this standpoint dependence is the only possible expression of man's individual relation to the whole. In his recognition of this fact, in this feeling of dependence, man learns to acquire for himself both freedom and happiness. This is the task and test of all religion which, if properly conceived, cannot fail to issue in man's perpetual blessedness.

Briefly to summarize Schleiermacher's main positions with special reference to their subsequent influence on systematic theology, we should draw attention to the following points :

(i) Schleiermacher aimed at a synthetic and systematic exposition of Christian dogma. His work was marked by unity and continuity ; and laid the foundation of the modern restatement and even reconstruction of theology. Thus Ritschl himself pays his tribute : " He is the *only* one since the



Reformation who has employed the scientific method of proof in theology."

(ii) By placing the essence of religion in feeling, Schleiermacher opened the door to a completely subjective interpretation of religious experience which had the most far-reaching results.

(iii) Schleiermacher's conception of dogma as the expression of ever-varying life, and the consequent denial of any permanent authority in the statement of religious belief, was of immense importance for the subsequent development of theology. In this connection we may note his remarkable anticipation of the results which the comparatively modern science of psychology has brought to light in the sphere of religion. "Everything immediate in religion is true, for otherwise how could it have come into existence? But only that is immediate which has not gone through the conceptual mill, but has grown up on the soil of pure feeling."

(iv) The doctrine of dependence was violently assailed and zealously defended. Its logical consequences seem to lead to Pantheism: its "immediacy" is not without traces of mysticism. It may perhaps be admitted that Schleiermacher did not lay sufficient stress on the *activity* which precedes and conditions this acknowledgment of dependence.

(v) Most important of all, perhaps, was his overthrow of rationalism and natural religion by insisting on the definite historical character of all religions. The far-reaching effects of the application of this principle to the origin and development of Christianity as a positive historical religion can hardly be exaggerated.

(vi) Finally, Schleiermacher laid down with emphasis the true relation of our Lord to the community He founded. Moses may be taken from Judaism, and the law remains: Mahomet may be taken from Islam and the pious Moslem can still practise his accustomed ceremonies. But to sever Christ from Christianity even in thought is an impossibility. The Redeemer and the redeemed are indissolubly joined. For the Christian religion is a life; and its principle is: "Because I live, ye shall live also." The idea of the relation subsisting between Christ and the Church was rightly apprehended by Schleiermacher and exercised the greatest influence on Ritschl, who agreed with him that Christ is "the Founder of a society only in virtue of the fact that the members of that society become conscious through Him of their redemption."

Schleiermacher was not immediately succeeded by Ritschl. In the interval three great schools of thought—the Liberal, the Conservative or Confessional, and the Mediating schools—took their rise, whose characteristics must be briefly examined, if we wish to form a right conception of Ritschl's true relation to contemporary theology and his real place in nineteenth century thought. In most respects the three schools are widely separated and even bitterly opposed: but in one particular they are all united. From Schleiermacher they learn to regard an empirically-acquired feeling or an immediately-given self-consciousness as the true starting-point of theology. Schleiermacher may himself rightly be regarded as the pioneer and champion of romanticism in theology; and in this respect the three schools of thought which

followed him were his disciples. Herein we can trace the fundamental agreement and historical point of union between these tendencies so widely different, yet so closely related. For, however deep their disagreement in particulars, they are all united in the importance and indeed pre-eminence to be attached to subjective impressions and aesthetic considerations. It is a proof of the vigorous vitality of romanticism that it shewed itself capable of such manifold and diverse development.

The two most important representatives of German Liberal Theology are Pfeiderer and Lipsius; but it is important to notice that they were influenced by Hegel as well as by Schleiermacher. It is well known that these latter two regarded each other as irreconcilable adversaries: and it is true that both in terminology and in their theory of knowledge they exhibit a fundamental difference. On this subject it may be enough to state that Schleiermacher was the true successor of Kant, while Hegel sought to re-establish by a new method the positions of the pre-critical philosophy. But apart from the methods and phraseology employed, it is very doubtful whether their conception of religion was not really the same. Both were the determined foes of rationalism, both looked upon man as a microcosm in which the whole life of the universe received compendious but complete expression. In both, religion is the realization of the infinite in human consciousness. But what is accomplished for Schleiermacher by his formula of absolute dependence, Hegel accomplishes through the process of speculative thought. It is plain that the Hegelian philosophy can come to terms with orthodoxy: for

all its historical and dogmatic progress is viewed in its relation to the development of the central idea of truth through antithesis. Each dogma, then, each period has a true and even necessary value in the great unfolding of the world-idea towards the perfect light of Christianity. It must be admitted that this treatment of all ecclesiastical history as furnishing countless and ceaseless illustrations of this single conception is apt to become unspeakably monotonous. And yet this conception of religion is perhaps superior to Schleiermacher's in the value it attaches to the religious idea. Hegel develops where Schleiermacher describes: and though the Liberal theologians lay great stress on the identification of religion with feeling they are naturally attracted by the idea of development, and thus exhibit great affinity to the scheme of the Hegelian dialectic and dogmatic.

Schleiermacher's empirico-historical conception of religion resulted in his drawing up a table of religions which in an ascending scale should manifest most clearly the central idea of complete dependence. At the head of the series stands monotheism which may be viewed from two standpoints as leading either to action or to contemplation. The former he regards as the highest possible religion and considers that in Christianity "teleological monotheism" finds its most perfect embodiment. The peculiar characteristic of Christianity which distinguishes it from all other religions of the same order is to be found in the perfect redemption it offers through Christ. Thus Schleiermacher and all his school lay the greatest possible stress on the right interpretation of Christ's work and Person, rightly regarding these as all important and

really constitutive facts in Christian piety. Redemption implies alienation: and thus Schleiermacher's conception of Christianity gave a great impetus to a thorough re-examination of such leading theological thoughts as sin, atonement, regeneration and justification. This necessarily led to much difference of view, but it also concentrated attention upon those dogmas which were in the greatest need of restatement, and we have already noticed the influence of Schleiermacher in this respect on the presentation of the Ritschlian theology.

The strongest opposition to Liberal tendencies was offered by the Confessional school of modern orthodoxy. The connection of this school with the historical movement in German history known as the Awakening is universally conceded. It was an attempt to import into theology a stronger and fuller tone than could be found in rationalism; a tone which should be more in keeping with the new-found theories of national life and national freedom. A special form of this theological awakening may be found in the revival of pietism, which in its insistence upon individualism and strictly Biblical theology, brought to the front a series of new and pressing problems. It was natural that the pietistic movement should inspire those who viewed its individualistic tendencies with misgiving, with a renewed interest in the maintenance of orthodoxy in matters of religious belief and practice.

The chief exponents of orthodoxy are to be found in the Erlangen school of theology. This school contains such well known names as Hoffman, Thomasius, and Frank. Their dependence upon Schleier-

macher is obvious: yet it was his method rather than his results that they adopted. Schleiermacher was really the first to draw up a system of Lutheran dogmatics. This, of course, was in itself no new thing: the new thing was to call it Lutheran rather than Christian. In Schleiermacher's view it had become necessary to choose between two historical types of religion—evangelical or catholic: whereupon he consciously and deliberately accepted the situation and added to the title of his work on the "Christian Faith" the definite limitation "according to the principles of the evangelical church." Thus in a manner Schleiermacher gave a clear call to particularism and confessionalism. In this connection we must once more lay stress upon his conception of Christianity as a positive historical religion; to him Christian dogma was the true expression of the life and experience of the Christian community. Christianity is the religion of those who are conscious of their redemption through Christ: and the relation to Christ is the absolutely determining factor in the religious life of the individual or of the Church. It is in these formulas of Schleiermacher which approximated so closely to and justified so clearly the results of ecclesiastical dogma, that the theologians of Erlangen chiefly show themselves his disciples.

Hoffman, like Schleiermacher, recognized the need of a systematic theology. Starting with the personal experience of the Christian he worked backwards to the experience of the Christian Church, as expressed in its creeds and confessions; and thus further to the documentary proofs in Scripture upon which all is based. In his work on prophecy and fulfilment his



system receives careful elaboration. It may suffice to say that the view of prophecy here taken is mechanical in the extreme. It would appear that prophecy itself has little value and even little meaning save as unfolding and foreshadowing reformation theology. Notwithstanding, the book has its value for its philosophy of religion ; it conceived religious history as a system of real facts, and Hoffman may even be said to have inaugurated a new method in theology in which he found many followers.

Thomasius in his history of doctrine is clearly influenced by the principle of Hegelian dialectic. He attaches the very highest importance to ecclesiastical dogma, not as marking a real stage in a perpetual process of development, but as the final and complete expression of reasoned theology.

Frank is perhaps the best known, as he is also the most able, representative of this school. His theological system is based upon an elaborate self-analysis. The personal experience of the Christian is the test by which all dogma must be tried ; and it is not found wanting, though at times it emerges in a form in which it would hardly be recognized by its original defenders. In this manner Biblical theology and ecclesiastical dogma (at anyrate in its Lutheran form) are found to be in complete harmony, and to afford a sufficient ground for Christian certainty.

Finally we come to the Mediating school of theology. The best known names are Dorner, Rothe, and Kähler. The "Vermittlungs-theologie" had ample scope for its powers of pacification. In two respects especially did this school endeavour to effect a rapprochement between opposing tendencies. In the



first place they insisted upon the many points of resemblance and contact between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, in their common opposition to the spirit of Catholicism. Moreover, believing that dogma divided where ethics made one, they laid the main stress on the ethical side of Christianity. In both respects they followed closely in Schleiermacher's footsteps, and professed also to be followers of Melancthon among the reformers.

In the second place, they strove to mediate between theology and philosophy. From Schleiermacher they inherited the idea of Christianity as a historically given, historically conditioned religion, while from Hegel they derived the impulse to demonstrate its essential reasonableness and intelligibility. Dorner's great work on the system of Christian doctrine is a typical example of the labours of this school. In it faith and doctrine, religion and science are happily combined. This combination may seem to destroy the character of unity which is to be desiderated in a systematic exposition of theology; but none the less this lack of unity in no wise hindered but rather increased the practical influence of the work. Rothe's books are characterized by much originality (though sometimes of a rather fantastic nature), by a thorough-going aestheticism and by a bold use of speculation. Kähler abjures speculation, and aims at a Biblical theology. Dogma is for him the conviction concerning the Saviour's work experienced first by the apostles and evangelists, then by the Church, ultimately recovered and clarified by the Reformers. But Kähler never seems equal to the task of satisfactorily adjusting the claims

of religious conviction and those of history. Was Christ really He whom the Apostles were convinced He was? We may admit that the convictions of the disciples coloured their narrative, but not to so great an extent that it is impossible to recover the lineaments of the historical Christ. The reliance upon evangelical experience in the last resort suggests that the fascination of Schleiermacher's subjectivism is still unbroken. It was reserved for Ritschl to break the spell ; and having indicated the characteristics of contemporary religious thought, we are now in a position to consider the significance of his own contribution to theology.

## CHAPTER III

### RITSCHL: HIS AGE AND HIS SCHOOL

OUR survey of the main theological tendencies in Germany during the nineteenth century will have taught us to realize how clearly all schools recognized the urgent need for a restatement of theology which should bring the facts and ideas of religion into harmony with the changed attitude of modern thought, and how earnestly they applied themselves to the task.

The need was indeed very sore, for though religion in a sense was more than ever revered as a motive to practical conduct, or as affording scope for man's spiritual powers, theology came to be regarded more and more as an essentially impossible science, masquerading in the borrowed plumes of truth, while a philosophy of religion was increasingly viewed as a contradiction in terms.

Briefly to recapitulate, and to summarize some of the causes which contributed to this result, we may notice :

(i) The prevailing distaste for metaphysics which was the logical outcome of the Kantian philosophy. Kant had set the strictest limits to the bounds of reason. He was the real founder of theoretical

agnosticism. In Germany the Neo-Kantians set out like the Seven against Thebes to the overthrow of all objective knowledge. In England, Herbert Spencer, with reiterated and almost monotonous insistence, proclaimed the entire unknowability of that which lay beyond the world of sense; that the reconciliation of religion and science could only be effected on the basis of a frank recognition "of this deepest, widest and most certain of facts that the Power which the Universe manifests to us is utterly inscrutable."

(ii) But the age was characterized not merely by a positive dislike for, but a still more profound distrust of metaphysics. The critical reaction towards the Kantian position relegated religion to a sphere, unknown and unintelligible; while for theology, extinction was confidently predicted. But at this stage, philosophy appeared no longer as a foe but as a friend. The Hegelian dialectic was zealous to take Christianity under the shelter of its wing. But it is perilous indeed to identify the Christian religion with any particular form of metaphysical speculation. Whither is it leading us: to what does it commit us? It will be little use demanding a separation when the union is become well nigh indissoluble; or at any rate when the mischief is done. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*" Even Hegelianism—if it does not lead (as it seems inevitably to do) to the rejection of the miraculous and a pantheistic view of the world—regards the ideas of the religious consciousness as nothing but wholly inadequate images of the perfect truths of speculative reason.

Thus whether philosophy chooses to attack, or offers to defend, makes little difference. The modern mind is simply obsessed with the idea that metaphysics offers far too insecure and precarious a foundation upon which to rest our religious convictions and most cherished beliefs.

(iii) In striking contrast to this anti-metaphysical tendency is the advance and success of the experimental sciences. New knowledge, new experience make fresh demands upon our faith, which at times it seems powerless to meet. "And yet the very vastness of those demands serves to obscure and conceal their true character. . . . The worlds of knowledge and of action have assumed such huge proportions, have accumulated such immense and complicated resources, have gained such supreme confidence in their own stability, have pushed forward their successes with such startling power and rapidity, that we have lost count of their primal assumption. In amazement at their stupendous range we are overawed : we dare not challenge them with their hypothetical origin."<sup>1</sup>

We are indeed in perpetual danger of forgetting that empirical science has imposed on itself definite limitations in order to achieve its two practical objects : to facilitate intercommunication, with a view to social co-operation, and to economize intellectual labour by the creation of generalized conceptions. It seems obvious that the success of the empirical sciences in describing and calculating the course of events must lie in the rigid exclusion of all moral, aesthetic, historical, and metaphysical considerations.

<sup>1</sup> *Lux Mundi* (12th Edition), 17.

Thus the interest of physical science is in no sense the logical one of consistent thought about ultimate reality, but the practical one of successful interference with nature. The wonderful achievements of science over an enormous field have blinded our eyes to its real character, namely, as a series of practical postulates whose truth has been demonstrated only within the strictly limited sphere of their practical applicability. For science starts with special restrictions and arbitrary exclusions. Practically this method has justified itself by its success. But it has no claim to be regarded as a philosophy of absolute truth. For physical science, asking special questions of nature, determines the character of the answers it wishes to receive. Notwithstanding, the progress of science has been so rapid and all-embracing that the purely practical, descriptive, and hypothetical character of its postulates has been forgotten, and they themselves have been treated as the indispensable conditions of all existence and all knowledge. Hence the truths of mechanical science are perverted into the falsehoods of mechanical philosophy,<sup>1</sup> and a materialism presses on, threatening to sweep away spiritual and idealistic interpretations of life in a universal overthrow.

(iv) On what basis then must religion rest? For long the authority of the Bible seemed all sufficient. But the Sacred Scriptures have themselves been subject to the most searching criticism; and, though it may be admitted that they have emerged triumphantly from the test, yet in very many cases the

<sup>1</sup> For all this section see an admirable chapter in Taylor's *Elements of Metaphysics* on "the descriptive character of science."

traditional accounts of their origin and authorship have necessarily been given up. In many minds the authority of the sacred books was so closely bound up with their authenticity, that the critical theories, even when their reasonableness was completely established, proved extremely distressing and disconcerting. But the higher criticism did not lose itself in questions of date and style: a far deeper question was involved. For the overthrow of Biblical infallibility necessitated an entirely new conception of the inspiration which might be claimed for the records of revelation. The character of revelation was itself treated as an open question. The human side received such abundant illustration, such unsparing criticism, such reiterated emphasis that the divine side receded further and further into the distance. Delighted to discover that the Bible was intelligible because it was in the language of men, a newer age appeared to forget that it was authoritative because through it came the voice of God.

(v) In no sense less modern or less powerful than the scientific doctrine of the uniformity of nature is the conception of the continuity of history. Historical science is even yet in its youth: but it makes exacting demands. The historian's task is not merely to record but to explain events. To do so, he must trace out cause and effect; for to believe in causeless events violates every principle of rational intelligibility. But when once the belief that history is all continuous, passes from a working hypothesis to a speculative doctrine, what becomes of inspiration or miracle, or of that crowning miracle of all, the Incarnation of the Son of God? This view of history has of



late years become increasingly attractive: but we must insist that it is rather a philosophical conception than a conception of the world either derived from, or proved by, history itself. It has however done real service in refusing to countenance any further the arbitrary distinction between sacred and profane, which destroyed that community of character between man's religious aspirations and secular experience, from which so much that is valuable may be learnt and on which modern science has done well to dwell. Yet in its extreme form the doctrine of the continuity of history makes havoc of the catholic conception of Christ. We quote from Pfleiderer's well known work on the philosophy and development of religion: 'The appearance of a heavenly being for an episodic stay upon our earth breaks the connection of events in space and time upon which all our experience rests and therefore it undoes the conception of history from the bottom.'<sup>1</sup>

(vi) Perhaps however the most pressing problem is the relation of Christianity to those social questions which the advance of science and the expansion of industry has in recent times forced to the front. A conviction has seized the Church that it is entrusted with a social mission.<sup>2</sup> Other-worldliness, once a praise, has become a reproach: the social question is almost universally recognized as ultimately a religious question, and a gospel of social regeneration, as well as, if not instead of, a gospel of individual salvation is everywhere preached. It is plain that much social

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, *Development of Religion*, ii. 43.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kidd's *Social Evolution*; Peile's *Reproach of the Gospel*; and the speeches and papers at the Pan-Anglican Congress on Socialism.

enthusiasm must immediately be won, if it is not to be permanently lost, to the Church. Accordingly we cannot be surprised if these tendencies have had no little effect in the increased importance given to representation of the Church as a body, as a kingdom with practical and ethical ideals, by which Christ is exalted as the ultimate authority and sovereign over every department of human life and thought.

Such were the principal influences at work which created the "Zeitgeist" into which Ritschl was born. The Ritschlian theology is a serious attempt to answer the intellectual and social demands of the age, to rescue theology from its perilous plight, and set it up upon a rock of stone.

It might seem superfluous to trace the history of Ritschl's theological career; but he learned so much from many teachers, incorporating many elements of their teaching, and rejecting others, that some acquaintance with his earlier associations forms an indispensable preliminary to the study of his matured theology. For Ritschl's mind was extraordinarily receptive, and yet at the same time remarkably independent.

Born in 1822, he soon showed an aptitude for theology "not merely from the child's natural desire to be what his father was (his father being 'bishop' and general superintendent of the Lutheran Church in Pomerania) but from a resistless speculative impulse to comprehend the highest truth."<sup>1</sup> In 1839 he began university life at Bonn, where Nitzsch enjoyed a great reputation. His first purchase in Bonn was a copy of Hegel's *Logic*. Two years later,

<sup>1</sup> *Leben*, i. p. 18.

dissatisfied with Nitzsch he moved to Halle, where Tholuck, Muller and Gesenius were the most distinguished theologians. That was Ritschl's period of stress. His religious views were undergoing profound modification. Reluctant to part with his strong and early belief in the supernatural, he nearly threw himself into the arms of Hengstenburg, the most famous representative of extreme conservatism. At this time, however, Erdmann was lecturing on the Hegelian philosophy, and Ritschl embraced with enthusiastic conviction the tenets of this, at that time, all-dominant school; but it is doubtful whether he ever entirely sacrificed his independent and essentially ethical view of the world to Hegelian intellectualism. However that may be, his philosophical speculations brought him into renewed contact with Baur's doctrine of reconciliation, and after a brief association with Rothe in Heidelberg, he definitely attached himself to the Tübingen School, the reputation whereof was then at its height. Here he produced a work on the relation of the third Gospel to Marcion's expurgated edition in which (in accordance with much that was produced at Tübingen) the theory of an Ur-Lukas figured prominently. But it was Ritschl's fate to be always alternately attracted and repelled. In 1846 he left Tübingen to begin lecturing as a "privat-docent" in Bonn. In the subsequent year Ritschl showed his independence by a vigorous review of Baur's work on *Paul, the Apostle of Jesus Christ*. Two years later appeared Ritschl's first work of permanent value, on the *Rise of the Old Catholic Church*. In the preface he refused to allow historical criticism to be drawn into the service of any dogmatic presuppositions, whether

negative or conservative ; while in the book itself he broke completely with the Tübingen theory of early Christianity. Baur maintained that Gentile Christianity was the product of exclusively Pauline influences : Ritschl shows that it was really due to the failure to appreciate the significance of the Pauline ideas. A second edition, almost wholly rewritten, appeared in 1857, in which he sought to obliterate the personal element. The book showed that its author accepted practically the entire New Testament Canon, and in the sphere of Church History insisted that external reconciliation would have been impossible save on the basis of internal agreement. Ritschl had waited six years before he received official recognition ; but in 1852 he was appointed " Professor Extraordinarius " and in 1859 " Professor Ordinarius." Meanwhile, though lecturing on exegesis and ethics, he began to devote himself more and more to the study of Dogmatics ; and when in 1864 he accepted the position of Professor Ordinarius at Göttingen, his attention was almost exclusively concentrated upon a fresh presentation of dogmatic theology.

In 1870 appeared the first volume of his *magnum opus* on Justification and Reconciliation. Ritschl approached this work as an avowed Kantian, accepting Kant's limitations of the theoretic reason, and his deduction both of God and of the Kingdom of God as postulates of the moral consciousness. He had also seriously studied Schleiermacher, whose methods and conclusions we find him alternately emphasizing and repudiating. Traces of mysticism discoverable in the latter's theological system were wholly to be

abhorred. In some of the letters of this period, Ritschl professes himself to be positively repelled by Schleiermacher's theology. Four years later, when studying the Discourses on Religion, his tone is no longer depreciatory but almost enthusiastic; indeed, he does not hesitate to declare that "he is the only one since the Reformation who has employed the scientific method of proof in theology."<sup>1</sup> Schleiermacher's opposition to natural religion, his insistence on the historical origin and character of all religions and on their embodiment in an organized fellowship; above all, the employment of a systematic and scientific method in theology, were all ideas which appealed powerfully to Ritschl, and he incorporates them all into his own work. From a specifically Christian standpoint, Ritschl also borrowed much from Schleiermacher—the conception of Christianity as a positive historical religion, the function of the Church as the sphere and witness of Christ's redeeming activity, the utter impossibility of a Christian religion without Christ: yet Kattenbusch seems to be in the right when he sees the real significance of Ritschl in the fact that he broke more completely than any of his predecessors with Schleiermacher's method. For while the latter made the pious consciousness his starting point, Ritschl starts from the Gospel, thus exactly reversing the leading principle of the three chief schools that followed Schleiermacher. Dogmatics for Ritschl is not the interpretation of *any actual state* of piety within the Christian community, but the unfolding of the norm of all piety in the Christian Church.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Reden*, p. 18. <sup>2</sup> Kattenbusch, *Von Schleiermacher zu Ritschl*, p. 60.

But there is a third influence which worked strongly on Ritschl's mind. His removal to Göttingen brought him into contact with Lotze, with whom he formed a close friendship, and from whose philosophical works he derived many suggestions. In particular, he declared himself a follower of Lotze rather than of Kant in his theory of cognition, though both his biographer and his critics agree in thinking that epistemologically he remained a Kantian to the end. More important is his obvious dependence on Lotze in the development of his theory of value-judgments, for it was Lotze who insisted with the utmost clearness on the independent value and reality of the religious—as opposed to the intellectualist—view of the world.

Ritschl had published the first volume of *Justification* in 1870, containing a history of the doctrine. The second volume appeared four years later and contained the Biblical material: the third in 1875, expounding "the positive development of the doctrine." The same year witnessed the publication of his treatise on Schleiermacher's *Discourse on Religion*, where he assigns a high and honoured place to one towards whom he has at times assumed an almost bitter and uncharitable attitude. We ought also to mention the *Instruction in the Christian Religion*, published in the same year, a little work originally intended for the use of higher forms in schools, but of great value as a compendious and careful exposition of the chief tenets of the Ritschlian system. His next great work was the *History of Pietism*, in three volumes, the first of which appeared in 1880, and the third in 1886. In 1881 he wrote a defen-



sive pamphlet on *Theology and Metaphysics*. It cannot be pronounced a very happy effort, nor is it characterized by the same fine grasp or lucid exposition of the subject which Ritschl's other works might lead us to expect.

Meanwhile he busied himself in preparing new editions of his great work. Some of the differences between the first and later editions are most remarkable, and we shall have occasion to allude to some of the more noticeable alterations at a later stage. But there is nothing here for surprise, as Ritschl's views never reached finality. He himself states that he had learned infinitely much in the preparation of his dogmatic work, and was still learning.<sup>1</sup> It was, as we have intimated, mainly in the direction of a Lotzean epistemology, and of the definition of religious knowledge as value-judgments that the most striking modifications are to be found.

In 1889 Ritschl died, leaving behind him a band of earnest disciples who set themselves with fervour to propagate the principles of their new found faith. It is important to notice wherein the followers of Ritschl were united, and where they are in complete disagreement, for the independence of the disciples is so strongly marked that friend and foe have alike raised the question as to whether it is possible to speak of a Ritschlian school in any sense at all. Thus Herrmann, the most illustrious representative of Ritschlianism, states: "A Ritschlian school as it exists in the warlike minds of its opponents, does not exist as far as I know. Of the theologians whom it is customary to regard as specially belonging to that

<sup>1</sup> *Leben*, ii. 150.



school, none is ready to uphold Ritschl's theology at all points. But we have learned more from him than from any other theologian since Schleiermacher."<sup>1</sup> Similarly Kaftan, after Herrmann the most noted of the older Ritschlians, writing twelve years ago, maintains that "The Ritschlian school as a definite unity which represents the same theology, exists only in the imagination of its opponents. The differences among us are very great. Nevertheless in some essential points we all agree."<sup>2</sup>

What then are these points of agreement? And what is it that these eminent theologians have learned from Ritschl? They have imbibed a principle rather than adopted a system. Thus Kattenbusch in the exceedingly able pamphlet to which we have referred declares that "Ritschl's theological principle is infinitely richer than Ritschl's system. Any man who seriously seeks to make Christ understood, can bring new thoughts to supplement those of Ritschl. Yet no such man will be in a position to think slightly of dependence on Ritschl, for he has done so much for our better appreciation and understanding of Christ that there is no man who would not feel himself bound to admit having received thoughts from him of the greatest weight."<sup>3</sup>

It was the principle of Ritschl—the principle that saw in the historical person of Christ a full revelation of things divine—that drew together men of the most diverse temperaments and views. And this diversity, so far from being an essential weakness of the

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann, *Verkehr*, 2nd edition, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeitschrift*, '96, p. 378.      <sup>3</sup> Kattenbusch, *op. cit.* p. 63.

school, tends to establish the real greatness of Ritschl, who could unite such heterogeneous elements and stimulate them to a common activity.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in the very beginnings of a Ritschlian school it becomes obvious that the peculiar characteristic of the school is not to be found in any unanimous agreement of its members in any identical propositions, but in their common acceptance and working out of definite principles.<sup>2</sup>

Pfleiderer (who asks the same question as Herrmann—whether there is such a thing as a Ritschlian school after all—and gives the same affirmative answer from a very different standpoint) sees the nerve of their opposition to the ordinary theology in their unconditional rejection of that which they persist in calling “natural religion,” but which is usually known as the religious disposition of human nature, the aprioristic foundation of all religious and moral development, the Divine image or natural revelation implanted in mankind.<sup>3</sup> Here at any rate we have a negative unanimity; but it is possible to discover a community of ideas and aims (derived generally from this root principle) shared by all the members of the school. Thus Herrmann speaks of the fundamental ideas which have drawn together a group of theologians in such an agreement as is not to be met with elsewhere with so great a number.<sup>4</sup> These fundamental ideas are admirably described by Professor Orr: “The strong contrast that the

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann, *Verkehr*, 2nd edition, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ecke, *Die theologische Schule Albrecht Ritschls*, vol. i. p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> Pfleiderer, *Die Ritschlianische Theologie*, 77.

<sup>4</sup> Herrmann, *Die Gewissheit des Glaubens*, 17.

Ritschlians all draw between religious and theoretic knowledge: the desire to free theology from all association with and dependence on metaphysics: the insisting on the positive revelation in Christ as the one source of true religious knowledge: the central position they all assign to the doctrine of the Kingdom of God; the rigorous exclusion from theology of all that lies outside the earthly manifestation of Christ; and finally the distrust of everything of the nature of mysticism in religion.”<sup>1</sup>

These ideas appealed most powerfully to a far wider circle than a few professed theologians. They struck a chord which found a ready response in the heart of the people. It is claimed that it is Ritschl who has given the most powerful encouragement to the present generation of German theologians: no less it is claimed that hearts are being won almost exclusively through the influences set in motion by Ritschl. The opposition his theology encountered, the desire to do him justice and propagate his views, set all Germany in an uproar: and even now though the weaknesses of the Ritschlian theology have been frequently exposed, though the arguments employed in its internal controversies have almost neutralized each other, and demolished the whole system in its parts, yet its influence is still dominant, its adherents still increasing, its vitality yet abounding, and its popularity yet unshaken. The reason can only be found in the fact that the Ritschlian theology does indeed answer to some of man's deeper needs: and this truly represents the case. It has often been remarked that Ritschlianism is the creation of its

<sup>1</sup> Orr, *Ritschlianism*, p. 55.

age: and the remark is apparently intended to be taken in a depreciatory sense, as discounting all Ritschl's claims to originality. To this it may be replied that there is a kind of originality which yields no good fruit for theology or practical religion. Ritschl's originality was not of this kind: rather it consisted in his ability to carry out new combinations. It was not the principles that he adopted but the manner in which these were formulated and combined that constitute Ritschl's own original contribution to theology.<sup>1</sup> He expressed much that was inarticulate: combined much that was sundered. He was thus enabled to propound a theology which proved itself peculiarly acceptable to contemporary thought.

In this connection we cannot forbear to quote a remarkable passage from a French writer which gives the true explanation of the extraordinary influence of this new theology upon all sorts and conditions of men.

"To those who are disheartened by the attacks of criticism it affirms that faith and salvation are independent of the results of our historical researches. To theologians weary of dogmatic controversies it presents a Christianity freed from all foreign metaphysics. To scholars trembling to see theology fall before the attacks of the natural sciences, it shows a way by which all collision with the natural sciences becomes impossible. To students devoted to history, it unfolds the development of the primitive church. To timid Christians, it says, God has never been angry with you: He declares to you that you may return to Him. To worn-out pessimists, it cries:

<sup>1</sup>Ecke, *Die theologische Schule A.R.* 13-41.

Work for the advancement of the Kingdom . . . Doctrine without Christian life is nothing. . . . In an age greedy for liberty and equality it establishes a social theology which makes the individual disappear in the mass."<sup>1</sup>

Nor should we omit to notice the claim put forward on behalf of the new theology to be the only adequate representation of original Lutheranism, the only true development of Reformation principles.<sup>2</sup> How far Ritschl's confident claim may be allowed will depend upon the view we take of the Reformation itself. Certain it is that the Reformers, struggling to be free of scholasticism, ended by erecting a similar edifice—as complete, as imposing, as fundamentally impossible (Ritschl would say), and as diametrically opposed to their own principles as that which it was intended to replace. Ritschl seizes on the idea of freedom as the ultimately determining significance of the Reformation, and strives to carry it to a logical conclusion, and to give it shape and substance in a systematic theology: with what justification and success we shall have to enquire later.

It now remains briefly to indicate the leading representatives of Ritschlianism to-day.

Herrmann, Professor in Marburg, is perhaps the earliest of the school. In his *Theology and Metaphysics*, published in 1876, he deals incisively with the relation of the two sciences, which he claims to be one of complete independence. Three years later followed another work on *Religion in Relation to Knowledge (Welterkennen) and Morality*, which intro-

<sup>1</sup> Schoen, *Les Origines historiques de la Théologie de Ritschl*, 6, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Kattenbusch, *op. cit.* 64.

duced the term *value-judgments* to theology, though of course the idea had long been familiar. But Herrmann is best known for his book on *The Communion of the Christian with God*, which has now reached a sixth edition in Germany, and a second in an English translation. In this powerful book Herrmann seeks to free religion from all scholastic and mystical conceptions, and to ground the certainty of faith in the impression wrought upon the soul by the historical Christ, as presented in the Gospel.

Julius Kaftan takes a very different line: to him religion is *the life hid with Christ in God*; but he is one with Herrmann in his energetic repudiation of anything savouring of scholasticism. His two chief works are on *The Essence of the Christian Religion* (1888) and the *Truth of the Christian Religion* (1889). In 1890 these were followed by a much smaller work entitled *Do we need a new Dogma?* Kaftan thinks that the whole history of dogma is a sad illustration of the perpetual perversion of genuine Christianity; but that the time has at last arrived for a synthetic and constructive attempt to find adequate expression for the chief Christian truths.

The adhesion of Harnack has proved a tremendous gain to the Ritschlian theology. Not only have his profound learning, his penetrating criticism, his constructive and imaginative faculties, his eloquent style, gained him a world-wide reputation among scholars of all nationalities, but he has deliberately set himself to popularize his own conception of religious faith and practice. "This I know," he declares in his preface to the English edition on his lectures on *What is Christianity?* "the theologians of every country only



half discharge their duties if they think it enough to treat of the Gospel in the recondite language of the schools, and bury it in scholarly folios." Harnack's views on the Hellenization of Christianity need not detain us here: they must be examined later: it must suffice to point out that the main purpose of his *History of Doctrine* is to prove that "dogma in its conception and development is a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel."<sup>1</sup>

It is not necessary to specify all the members of the Ritschlian school; but mention must be made of Bender, whose extreme subjectivism led to his ultimate exclusion from the party: and of Schultz and Wendt who are associated respectively with very valuable work in the theology of the Old Testament and the New. The doctrine of value-judgments has created a literature of its own. Its chief upholders are Otto Ritschl (the son of the founder of the school, who has also written a full and able biography of his father), Max Scheibe, and Max Reischle. To Kähler we have already alluded: he can perhaps scarcely in strict justice be called a Ritschlian, though he has learned much from Ritschl. His standpoint, as we have seen, is "mediating." Ecke follows Kähler in his irenical standpoint, and has produced a book on the theological school of Albrecht Ritschl and the evangelical Church of to-day, which must rank as a very thorough and valuable contribution to the literature of the subject (1897).

In France, Sabatier has written with fervour and eloquence in defence of the principles of the Ritschlian theology. It must not be supposed that there has

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmageschichte*, i. 18.



been direct or conscious borrowing; but it is admitted by Sabatier and others that there is a kindred spirit "with the theological movement to which Ritschl has given his name, the doctrines of which, while not to be confounded with ours, yet approached them on the chief points."<sup>1</sup> Sabatier's standpoint may best be seen in his *Esquisse d'une Philosophie de la Religion*. He thinks that the younger generation have been driven into an *impasse* when they are bound to choose between pious ignorance and brutal knowledge: when they must continue to live by a morality which contradicts science, or build up a theory of the world which science condemns.<sup>2</sup> He sees an escape in a philosophy of religion, based upon a study of psychology and history.<sup>3</sup> Moreover he adopts the Kantian epistemology which denies the possibility of knowing of God, save "symbolically": and also Ritschl's distinction between judgments of essence, and judgments of value. Thus he reaches the conclusion that in the face of the subjectivity of religious knowledge, symbols alone can adequately express religious ideas.<sup>4</sup> We can thus see how nearly the school of Sabatier approached to Ritschl, whose theology had for them the supreme merit of giving an answer to the needs of the present generation.

It is only in recent years that Ritschlianism has begun to attract any attention in English speaking countries: and here such attention as it has received, has been almost invariably unfavourable. Exceptions, however, must be made in the case of Professor Swing, who appears as an enthusiastic disciple in

<sup>1</sup> Ménégoz, *Publications Diverses*, 236.

<sup>2</sup> Sabatier, *op. cit.* v.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.* xv.

<sup>4</sup> P. 303.

America, and Dr. Garvie who also follows Ritschl—yet sometimes afar off. The latter's "critical and constructive exposition and estimate" of the Ritschlian theology is perhaps the fullest as it certainly is the most sympathetic account of the aims and doctrines of the movement in the English language.

We ought perhaps also to mention Professor M'Giffert, whose *History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age* (1897) clearly exhibits the Ritschlian "Tendenz," though the subject obviously does not admit of any detailed exposition of theological presuppositions.

Quite lately, however, a great change has taken place. "Modernism" has been attempting to do for Catholicism what Ritschl tried to achieve for Protestantism, that is, to set religion free from all precarious connection with historical criticism or scientific speculation. The attempt to suppress the movement by invoking authority had the inevitable effect of concentrating attention upon its claims and characteristics. Almost simultaneously the standard of the New Theology was raised in one of the most prominent Nonconformist pulpits. To those unacquainted with the liberal tendencies of modern theology, the advent of the New Theology appeared startlingly sudden: all were surprised; most were shocked. Yet, as a matter of fact, the theology as then propounded was anything but new, and its appearance anything but sudden. It was merely the place and moment of its publication that were in any way really sensational. For the New Theology is but one more attempt to mediate between the religious and scientific views of the world;

between modern thought and ancient doctrines; between present needs and past ideas. It represents to a great extent the English phase of the Ritschlian movement. In some respects the English version of the New Theology is sundered most widely from the theology of Ritschl and his followers: it is connected with a Hegelian philosophy which Ritschl would have energetically repudiated; notwithstanding, it is not far removed from that vigorous modern pragmatism which makes man the measurer of all things, and would distinguish the Christ of history from the Christ of experience, not with the view of reconciling or rather combining two independent presentations, but of forcing them apart as fundamentally opposed and incapable of reconciliation.

The Ritschlian theology is a challenge to our age. The old theology has failed apparently in recent years to arouse enthusiasm, to inspire social effort, or to encourage independent thought. An almost pessimistic despondency hovers around the seekers after truth.<sup>1</sup> What is to be the end of these things? Cannot religion be saved apart from reason? Cannot faith persist without creeds? Cannot theology be systematized without dependence on metaphysics? Cannot the miraculous be eliminated without any real loss to the Christian believer? The Ritschlian school has given its answer to these questions: an answer clear and definite and systematic. It is incontrovertible that in many directions it has succeeded

<sup>1</sup> In this connection we may call special attention to two remarkable books of recent years. Kidd's *Social Evolution*, and Balfour's *Foundations of Belief*. The latter has been warmly welcomed by Kaftan as strongly supporting the Ritschlian position.

where other attempts had failed. It should, therefore, in no sense be treated without sympathetic respect, without a willingness to learn: nor should it be rejected until, after a searching examination, it should be found unfitted to take the place of that theology which it was intended to supersede. To such an examination we must now address ourselves.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

THE Ritschlian theory of knowledge is the basis upon which the whole edifice of the Ritschlian theology has been erected. We have already alluded to Ritschl's own words in this connection. He insists that every theologian whose aim it is to treat his subject in a scientific method, must proceed on a definite theory of knowledge, of which he must be deliberately conscious, and which he must be prepared to justify and defend.<sup>1</sup>

It must be admitted that this seems a strange beginning for a theology professing to abjure all metaphysics. For to establish an epistemological theory, some kind of metaphysical enquiry becomes essential. But Ritschl will not leave us in doubt as to his meaning—for he continues: "If I am scientifically qualified in theology, then I shall follow a theory of knowledge which in the determination of the objects of knowledge will be regulated by a conception of things, and thus will be metaphysical." So the promise of a theology without metaphysics was somewhat delusive after all: for the only way to reach it is along a metaphysical road. Arrived at our destination we need traverse that path no more:

<sup>1</sup> *Theologie und Metaphysik*, 48.

yet if we put up "no thoroughfare," how will others come thither? We climb up to the height of theology without metaphysics, where we can dwell securely, but it is only by a metaphysical ladder that we have attained thereto. If from our point of vantage we kick away the ladder as of no further use, how shall others find their way to our dwelling-place? Yet, Ritschl, embarking on a metaphysical venture to reach the place where metaphysics may not intrude, on the one hand allures those who entertain a deep-seated distrust of philosophy with a promise of theology without metaphysics, and on the other insists upon the necessity of metaphysical appliances if men are ever to reach the haven where they would be. He affirms with emphasis that it is "an inconceivable and incredible contention that we should be charged with excluding all metaphysics from theology," and asserts that the real point at issue between him and his opponents, is not *whether*, but *what* metaphysics are to be employed.

After this repeated insistence upon the necessity of a theory of knowledge for any systematic handling of theology, it is somewhat disconcerting to read after an interval of only a few pages that "as Christianity is neutral in regard to the differences between Jewish and Hellenic morals, so also as a religion it is indifferent in regard to the different theories of knowledge by means of which its intellectual contents may be scientifically arranged."<sup>1</sup>

The only coherent meaning to be gleaned from this glaring inconsistency is that while theology depends upon a theory of knowledge, religion does

<sup>1</sup> *T.M.* 46.

not. We must therefore assume that theology and religion represent two wholly independent points of view ; or, in other words, that theology without metaphysics has passed into religion without theology. Apparently Christianity is identified wholly with religion, and dissociated from theology : for Christianity is indifferent to theories of knowledge, while theology cannot possibly pretend to indifference as to the character of its fundamental presupposition. But could any proposition well be more questionable than a theory which entirely divorces religion from theology, and makes what is fundamental to the one a matter of indifference to the other? However, without dwelling unduly upon this initial difficulty, we will proceed to consider Ritschl's own view as to the different theories of knowledge which have held the field, and the reasons which have led him to accept the Lotzean epistemology.

Within the domain of European thought Ritschl distinguishes three theories of knowledge. The first is due to the influence of Plato, and has found a home in the realm of scholasticism. This theory, which exercises perhaps the widest influence and may be almost identified with the conceptions of popular epistemology, maintains (according to Ritschl) that the thing itself can be distinguished from its effects upon ourselves. Thus while the thing works upon us by means of its mutable qualities, arousing our sensitive and perceptive faculties, yet it really rests behind its qualities as an unchanging self-equivalent unity of attributes. In other words this theory holds that we can know the thing in itself apart from its effects, and that everything



may be deduced from universal ideas; thereby overlooking the fact that the thing in itself is merely the permanent memory-picture due to repeated impressions or intuitions of effects by which our sensation and perception have been stimulated.

Ritschl next discusses the second theory of knowledge which he holds to have been promulgated by Kant. This would confine our intellectual knowledge to the world of phenomena, but declares the thing in itself or the things in themselves, in whose reciprocal changes the changes in the world of appearances have their origin, to be unknowable. The latter part of this doctrine Ritschl holds to be a well-justified repudiation of scholastic philosophy: but in the earlier part of the theory he maintains that Kant has himself fallen into the chief error of scholasticism—the separation of the thing from its appearances. For a world of phenomena can be posited as the object of knowledge only if we suppose that in them something—that is, the thing itself—appears to us or is the cause of our sensations and perceptions; otherwise the phenomenon can only be treated as an illusion. Thus, by his use of the conception of phenomenon, Kant contradicts his own principle that real things are unknowable.

Before proceeding to mention the third theory of knowledge which is due to Lotze and is adopted by Ritschl,<sup>1</sup> we must offer a few remarks on his criticisms of the two forms of epistemology which he rejects. In the first place it is hardly fair to credit

<sup>1</sup> If we can take Ritschl's own word for it: but all are agreed, both friend and foe, that despite slight modifications of phraseology, he remained a Kantian to the end.

Plato with a theory of knowledge. Plato's object was to discover not the necessary factors of human knowledge but the ultimate nature of reality. His intention therefore was not epistemological but metaphysical; and his method was logical and deductive rather than analytical and descriptive. He ought therefore to have been contrasted rather than compared with Kant; and contrasted rather in method and intention than in result. Moreover it is astonishing to be told that the naïve realism and empiricism of ordinary thought should be identified with Platonic idealism. But when we come to the criticism of the Kantian theory our astonishment is increased. For it passes understanding to conceive how the unknowability of the things can be justified, if the limitation of knowledge to phenomena, which this theory obviously necessitates, is to be condemned. The difficulties with which we are thus confronted at the very outset of our examination of the Ritschlian position (when moreover he is simply attempting to describe the standpoint of others, and not elaborating a metaphysical theory of his own) afford a sure indication that Ritschl's strength does not lie in philosophical enquiry but in systematic theology—a conclusion for which our further investigations will be found to afford the completest justification.

Having thus dismissed the Platonic and Kantian theories, Ritschl declares his adhesion to that propounded by Lotze. He holds that "in the phenomena which in a limited space exhibit change to a limited extent and in a determinate order we cognize the thing as the cause of its qualities operating upon us, as the end which these serve as means,

and as the law of their constant changes." This theory Ritschl accepts as his own, referring the reader for a further treatment of the subject to his little book on *Theology and Metaphysics*, where in trenchant, controversial and, it must be admitted, confused style he elaborates his theory of knowledge.

Having as it were appealed unto Caesar, to Caesar shall he go, and we with him. But before our departure, we must insist that Ritschl's theory—we know the thing in its appearances—by which he supposes the problem of knowledge to be solved, seems hardly to be aware of the existence of such a problem at all. It seems intensely simple and illuminating to assert that we know the thing in its appearances; so simple, that, as Pfeiderer says with justice, we naturally wonder why it should never have occurred to such talented people as Plato and Kant!<sup>1</sup> The formula entirely ignores the real difficulty, whence do the phenomena originate? Wherein do appearances consist? Are they external to ourselves, or merely subjective representations of our own consciousness? The latter seems the only conceivable alternative on this theory, but what then is the relation of the appearance to the thing? How in the face of repeated contradiction are we to reconcile knowing and being, reality and appearance? The theories of Lotze, as we have seen, carry us far beyond the non-intelligent formula which Ritschl employs: but it is precisely such metaphysical theories as those of Lotze that Ritschl either abjures or ignores. We ought also in this

<sup>1</sup> Pfeiderer, *Die Ritschlsche Theologie*, 2.

connection to remember how very strongly Lotze himself condemned all epistemological enquiries, as affording any adequate basis for religious or theological construction. Wherefore Ritschl's claim in reference to the Lotzean epistemology must be accepted with many reservations.

We are now ready to accompany Ritschl, and to undertake the examination of his *Theology and Metaphysics*, by the study of which our ideas as to the real significance of his theory may receive considerable enlightenment. Here we find a repetition of the statement that the distinction commonly drawn between the thing as it is for us, and the thing as it is for itself, lacks real foundation, but originates in a memory-picture which represents something constant and invariable behind the immediate appearance. This unchanging somewhat is however no more than an imaginary or "shadowy" representation of reality. But now we are face to face with the old question, what is reality? The things in themselves, that is, the things independent of our consciousness, are nought but a deceptive shadow-picture: yet the identification of the real things with the products (for Ritschl's theory forbids us to say objects) of our representing consciousness seems incredible. This however seems to be Ritschl's intention. In proof of our assertion we must quote a passage of great importance. "One knows," he says, "a self-sufficient thing first in its qualities. . . . The appearances, which are perceived in a limited space in the same position or succession, and their changes in a definite order and method are combined by our faculty of representation in the

unity of the thing after the analogy of the cognizing soul, which in the change of its corresponding sensations feels and remembers itself as a permanent unity. Accordingly the thing which we represent for ourselves is an existence in itself. . . . Accordingly the isolated thing will be thought as its own cause and its own purpose. Thus considered the thing loses all its peculiar qualities. It is a purely formal conception without all content.”<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl lays down that a doctrine of things is only *formally* employed in theology<sup>2</sup>: in the same way he says a few pages previously that the formally correct statement of theological doctrines is dependent on a conscious or unconscious theory of cognition.<sup>3</sup> What Ritschl means (and indeed explicitly states in another passage) is that the laws laid down have no exclusive bearing on religious knowledge, but are applicable to all knowledge as such. In the first volume he speaks of the necessity for theologians of ideas which have originated outside the fact of Christianity, and which, *even though they should be only logical*, will yet have a determining influence upon the theological presentation of Christianity.<sup>4</sup>

Professor Swing, an ardent champion, would minimize the significance of Ritschl's declarations concerning the dependence of theology upon a correct theory of knowledge: Ecke, followed to some extent by Garvie, suggests that this theory of cognition is a foreign element in the Ritschlian theology. To this, however, it must be replied that the abandonment of the Ritschlian theory of knowledge would

<sup>1</sup> See additional note at end of chapter.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 18.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 16.

<sup>4</sup> *R. V.* i. 571.

mean an entire transformation of the whole theological system. It is indeed only too clear that it is because of the theology that Ritschl concerns himself with knowledge; and that the theory of knowledge is intended to prescribe for theology the bounds which it shall not pass.

A further quotation from Ritschl's *Theology and Metaphysics* will throw light both upon the theory and upon his own curious lack of self-consistency. "The idea of a thing originates from the different sensations which in a regular order attach themselves to something which experience fixes in a limited space. An apple we represent as a round, red, sweet thing . . . what we mean is that we know the subject of this proposition only in its predicates. The impression that the thing is a unity in the changes of the qualities springs from our own persistent sense of unity amid the succession of our sensations *produced by the thing.*"<sup>1</sup>

The last sentence contains an obvious self-contradiction. The whole passage has made it perfectly plain that the idea of a thing is a purely formal conception, a unity of phenomena, which is due to the activity of our representing consciousness through its experience of simultaneous sensations. The unity of the thing corresponds to the continuity of ourselves who, amid changing surroundings and successive experiences, are conscious of our abiding unity. This is not to be distinguished from subjective idealism—a philosophy in flagrant contradiction with the certain facts of life, and moreover psychologically false. It fails, moreover, to give a satisfactory

<sup>1</sup> *T. M.* 37.

answer to fundamental questions such as the origin of sensation and the nature of unity ascribed to things. Stated in whatever form it rarely fails to embody a contradiction.<sup>1</sup> But the contradiction is rarely expressed in such paradoxical form as is done by Ritschl in the passage quoted above: for in the last sentence, after carefully explaining the subjective origin of the thing, he adds a few words which can have no other meaning save that the thing is itself the cause or origin of our sensations. How these two conceptions are to be reconciled must remain a mystery, for Ritschl is himself, to all appearances, sublimely unconscious of his mutually exclusive representations. Yet it is plainly impossible that the same thing should have been conceived both as the product and the cause of our sensation. Pfeiderer is a severe critic: but both Garvie and Orr admit the justice of his criticism at this point. "The whole secret of the Ritschlian method is here exhibited in this perplexing and capricious swaying and skipping between an idealistic and realistic mode of consideration."<sup>2</sup> The claim to represent the epistemological standpoint of Kant and Lotze must be set aside in favour of an extraordinary combination or rather confusion of naïve realism and subjective idealism which makes havoc of any attempt to reach the objective realities with which theology must surely be concerned. For as we have already intimated, this theory of knowledge stands in closest connection with Ritschl's presentation of theology, since it enables him at one and the same time to confine our attention to things as they are

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Taylor, *Elements of Metaphysics*, 78-79.

<sup>2</sup>Pfeiderer, *op. cit.* 5.



for us, and yet to claim for them some kind of objective reality. In his *Theology and Metaphysics* he lays down and elaborates the epistemological principles by means of which he proposes to establish his theological positions.

Let us briefly glance at the effects of this theory on the three theological conceptions of God, Christ, and the Soul.

(i) "If God is to be reckoned among objects of knowledge for scientific theology, then every claim that we can learn anything of God *in Himself*, apart from what may be known *for us* through the revelation which was given indeed by Him (we know not how) but made manifest in our sensations and our perceptions, every such claim must be pronounced unfounded. This claim is yet advanced by Frank who would have us regard God as the Absolute, and by Luthardt who distinguishes the nature and attributes of God *in Himself* as prior to the attributes as manifested in activities *for us*."<sup>1</sup> This Ritschl holds to be the source of all the false metaphysic which is generally characteristic of popular thought, and yet has no claim to represent scientific truth in spite of its constant appearance in Christian dogmatics.

Now Ritschl is pushing at an open door when he contends that no knowledge or doctrine of God is possible without our having felt and perceived a revelation from Himself. The real question is whether on the basis of that revelation we are entitled to draw further conclusions as to the nature and character of that activity, that cause in which the revelation itself originated: in other words, why

<sup>1</sup> *T.M.* 34.

should we not from the character of the revelation proceed to certain inferences as to the character of the Revealer? When, further, it is taken into account that the revelation is itself largely concerned with the nature and character of God, it becomes impossible to see why such enquiries should be regarded either as unscientific or unchristian.

The rejection of all speculative effort to understand what God is in Himself and for Himself, and the limitation of all our knowledge of the Divine to what God is for us, seem to lead straight to an atheistic view of the world. This danger has been vividly recognized even by disciples, and is all the more pressing because Ritschl was inclined to apply the Feuerbachian theory to all non-Christian religions. To make a solitary exception in the case of Christianity, to which alone a supernaturalistic theory of Revelation is held applicable, must be pronounced an exceedingly hazardous experiment.<sup>1</sup> But the insistence that we can only know things in their appearances, renders the conclusion inevitable that God can only be known in His historical manifestations. The Being of God can logically have no significance save as a general expression for the moral government of the world: and God is lost in His attributes. The Deity is merely a personification of the Divine in which all human beings share.

This conclusion is energetically repudiated by Ritschl, who holds strongly to the doctrine of the Personality of God.<sup>2</sup> Ritschl moreover speaks of a self-end of God into which the world-end is merged. But such conceptions are wholly incompatible with

<sup>1</sup> Troeltsch, *Zeitschrift*, 95, p. 375.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* ii. 215-227.

the language previously employed. There Ritschl states that it is impossible to know God in any other way, save in so far as He exists *for us*. But Pfleiderer is surely right in his contention that "personality is a being for self which apprehends itself as such, and distinguishes itself from others, which is not lost in the manifoldness of its modes of activity and expression, but abides as a constant unity, with itself and in itself."<sup>1</sup>

In the same way the idea of a self-end of God (which is prominent in Ritschlian theology) certainly implies a being for self which is not exhausted in a being for others.

Ritschl is not true to his own premises; his strong insistence on the personality of God is not to be reconciled with the philosophical principles on which his theory of knowledge is based: it is preserved because in some strange way what is denied to philosophy, he allows to theology.

Such then is the theory of God that is given by this theory of knowledge. We shall, of course, have to deal with his doctrines at greater length at a later stage: here we are merely illustrating how fundamental is this theory of knowledge to the correct presentation of theology as conceived by Ritschl. We must now touch upon this theory as it affects the doctrine of Christ, and the doctrine of the Soul.

(ii) Ritschl, as we shall see later, professes to derive all his theology from the historical Person of Jesus Christ. That is an unexceptionable position for Christian theology. But Ritschl uses it as a pretext for refusing to take any account of those questions

<sup>1</sup> Pfleiderer, *op. cit.* 8.

as to the transcendental element in Christ's person, which are forced upon us by an impartial examination of the history. "*What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he?*" are questions which cannot be evaded, if we are aiming at a historical interpretation of the Redeemer's life and work. The Ritschlian theory of knowledge, on the other hand, lays down the impossibility of knowing any character or personality save through such words and works as are manifestations of spiritual activity.<sup>1</sup> This again all would admit: but the meaning which the author gave to these words is very different from that of orthodox Christianity. We, like him, would start with the historical acts as manifesting character; but unlike him we would not remain in them, but start from them. It would be hopeless to reconstruct for ourselves a conception of a personality by merely piecing together the fragmentary notices of his historical activities: it would be monstrous to suppose that in such occasional indications a character was contained, rather than expressed. The Ritschlian theory professes to follow a historical method which would make all true history impossible; for it would be reduced to a barren enumeration of names and dates. The theory is intended to exclude all discussions as to the nature of Christ's Person; but logically applied it would exclude everything that would make the outward words and works intelligible. For by assuming that the entire personality was confined to recorded actions, it would forbid all consideration of possible motives, all tracing of purposes, all thought of feeling—in fact everything most

<sup>1</sup> *T.M.* 30.

necessary for any true delineation of character. That any history thus constructed, should be accepted as other than provisional, we do not for a moment contend ; but that any representation of a personality, drawn from historical actions, without any consideration of the motives underlying those actions, should be considered adequate, is wholly inconceivable. But the Ritschlian theology does not aim at logical consistency, it aims rather at sweeping metaphysics from theology. So in order to preclude the discussion even of Christ's pre-existence, or the union of Divine natures, we are told that "the Godhead of Christ must be apprehended in the definite traits of his historical life as an attribute of his temporal existence."<sup>1</sup> Everything else would be rendered meaningless by the theory of knowledge which sees the reality of the thing only in its activities and attributes.

(iii) What then of the Soul? Ritschl's language is unambiguous. "We know nothing of the soul existing in and for itself, nothing of a self-enclosed life of the spirit above or behind those functions in which it is active, living, and present to itself as a being of special worth."<sup>2</sup> So the One is dethroned, and the Many reign : the One becomes appearance, and the Many reality. Yet Ritschl appeals constantly to the consciousness of self-identity amid change : and it is from the knowledge of our own permanent unity according to his theory that we ascribe unity to things around us. But how this consciousness of self-identity, and this knowledge of permanent unity can either originate or survive, in a hypothesis which

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 383.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 21.

makes the manifold functions the only reality, and explicitly denies the existence of an underlying, all-comprehending unity, must remain a mystery. We are invited to hold a theory of the soul without a soul at all. As for the immortality of the soul, it is impossible to imagine on this hypothesis how the soul could survive the suspension of those functions conditioned by its attachment to a bodily frame, unless it has a permanent unity, a real existence in and for itself.

Nothing would be a greater mistake than to imagine that this extravagant theory of knowledge could without loss be removed from the Ritschlian theology: for it is upon the foundation of this theory of knowledge that the entire theological system reposes. Ritschl is careful to tell us so himself. "Theology," he declares, "has nothing to do with the natural order, but only with the conditions and activities of the spiritual life of man. Hence the use of psychology is necessary. In this connection we are confronted with a collision between two conceptions corresponding to the first and third theories of knowledge. The first gives rise to the assumption of scholastic psychology that behind its special activities of feeling, thinking, and willing, the soul itself remains at rest in its self-equivalence as the unity of the corresponding powers, the spiritual faculties."<sup>1</sup> This theory he criticises and rejects, he then, in harmony with that theory of knowledge which he has adopted, propounds his own idea of the nature of the soul. What it is, we have seen: whither it will lead us, we see, also, too clearly.

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* ii. 20 (free and slightly compressed translation).

We thus arrive, by means of this conception of knowledge, at a theology where, to quote the words of Dr. Garvie ("sympathetic" as ever, if yet critical for the nonce): "God is, so to speak, lost in His kingdom, Christ in His vocation, the Soul in its activities."<sup>1</sup>

It really seems incredible that this result represents Ritschl's intentions. Many indications including perpetual inconsistencies seem to point in an opposite direction, and perhaps we may conjecture with a penetrating critic "that Ritschl did not make this theory of knowledge the basis of his theology from the first, but propounded it subsequently in its defence."<sup>2</sup>

#### ADDITIONAL NOTE.

We quote the passage in its full context :

"Accordingly the isolated thing loses all its peculiar qualities. *It is a purely formal conception without all content.* So insignificant is the conception of the Absolute proclaimed by Frank with so much stress as God!"

No slight stir has been raised concerning the sentence italicized. Stählin seized upon it as a convincing proof of the subjective idealism which underlay the entire Ritschlian theology. Favre follows suit, and declares that Ritschl must be counted as one of the extreme subjectivists. Pfeleiderer is equally decisive, and Professor Orr describes "the whole process as subjective, hypothetical, imaginative and never leading beyond phenomena"; and interprets this particular passage as a description of the thing only as "a mental fiction." Wherefore it needed considerable courage for Dr. Garvie to maintain that all these scholars were labouring under an entire misapprehension: that the passage

<sup>1</sup> Garvie, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup> Pfeleiderer, *Development of Theology*, 183.



was intended as Ritschl's repudiation of Frank's views, rather than a declaration of his own.

Now it may be admitted that the argument seems intended to prove the worthlessness of the conception of the Absolute in theology, particularly as the term is employed by Frank. In this argument is included the analysis of our formation of the conception of the thing, showing that it is nothing but a conception divested of all content; and this conclusion naturally discredits still further the metaphysical position adopted by Frank. From this "sympathetic scrutiny of the passage" Dr. Garvie concludes that the words do not refer to the view of the thing that Ritschl holds as his own, but to the perversion of that view of which he thinks Frank is guilty. That certainly is an extremely sympathetic interpretation: it is ingenious also. But is it correct? It seems unlikely in the highest degree.

(i) Ritschl refers to this passage later: and there he identifies himself with the present argument. "The impression that the perceived thing in the changes of its qualities is one, arises as has been remarked above (p. 19) from the persistence of the feeling of self in the succession of our sensations excited by the thing. Further, the conception of the thing as cause and purpose of itself arises from the certainty that I am cause and I am purpose in the activities which I initiate."<sup>1</sup>

Now it was directly in connection with the thing conceived "as its own cause and as its own purpose" that Ritschl declared that this idea amounted to "a purely formal conception without any content." As, moreover, in the later passage he proceeds to appeal to Lotze in favour of his view, there seems to be no reasonable doubt that he is here stating his own conclusions.

(ii) Conclusions perhaps; but not his own. This, how-

<sup>1</sup> *T.M.* 38.

ever, cannot be maintained: he gives an account of how the conception of a thing is formed, and shows that from his point of view, it must lead to an impossible abstraction. How then does the conclusion discredit Frank's rather than his own views? The answer is simple. Ritschl will not suffer metaphysical questions to intrude into the domain of theology: Frank, on the other hand, sets out with the avowed intention of effecting a reconciliation between the speculative reason and theological dogma. Ritschl proceeds to show the logical conclusion which must inevitably (as he thinks) follow from such a proceeding. Psychologically, Ritschl's statements are not to be justified: logically, arguing from his own premises, they are undoubtedly correct. He is unable to conceive of a thing save as a formal conception without content, and this is an idea which he thinks reduces all metaphysical theology to absurdity.

(iii) Dr. Garvie, contending that Ritschl has been grievously misunderstood and misjudged, quotes a passage from another work which he thinks might have been expressly written to guard against such misconceptions. "For the doctrine of the thing it is assumed that our mind is not of itself the cause of sensations, perceptions, etc., but that these distinctive activities of the soul are excited in coexistence with things to which even the human body also belongs."<sup>1</sup> The meaning is perhaps not so clear as Dr. Garvie seems to think, but even if it were, the passage would prove nothing save Ritschl's inconsistency in all such matters, an inconsistency which even his stoutest defenders (such as Traub and O. Ritschl) are constrained to admit. The quotation, however, suggests another. Mention is made

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 18.—A work in which the doctrine of things is plainly at variance with the more subjective philosophy of Theology and Metaphysics.

of "the distinctive activities of the soul." We shall have occasion to speak further of Ritschl's doctrine of the soul, but it will at present suffice to quote Dr. Garvie's own estimate of Ritschl's teaching on this point. "In his denial of the metaphysical existence of the soul, and his restriction of personal life to spiritual activities, he implicitly contradicts the unity and identity of the 'self,' the possibility of character, the certainty of immortality."<sup>1</sup> This will help us to gauge the value of the analogy Ritschl draws from the identity of the soul to the unity and reality of the thing.

<sup>1</sup> Garvie, *op. cit.* 225.

## CHAPTER V

### THE JUDGMENTS OF VALUE

#### I

THE suggestion that the Ritschlian theory of knowledge was in a manner a happy afterthought to cover the deficiencies of the Ritschlian theology, derives a considerable measure of probability from the fact that the theory of value-judgments was only expounded in the second edition of Ritschl's great work on Justification and Atonement, though it has since been elaborated with remarkable modifications by different members of the school.

It will have been clear that the epistemology we have been considering cannot afford any certainty for religious knowledge. Ritschl therefore boldly declares religious knowledge to be exempt from the inexorable laws governing all other knowledge, insisting that between theoretical and religious knowledge there is a difference profound and fundamental.

In his first edition Ritschl distinguished sharply between religion on the one hand, and philosophy and science on the other. The former, starting with the conception of the unity of God, naturally viewed the world also as a unity, as a whole in which the

Divine life was manifested, or the Divine will was operative. This conception of the world as a whole is plainly not a fact of experience: wherever it appears, it is due to the religious representation. Science and philosophy have indeed neither material nor method for arriving at such a conception. They deal with general laws of knowledge and existence: their function can only be to observe and explain the world in its parts: a unified view of the world can be given by religion alone. The claim of philosophy to find the highest law of being must inevitably bring about a collision with religion. But in truth this is no part of the task of theoretic knowledge. Where philosophy aims at rising to a systematic unity, we can immediately detect a religious impulse. Even in materialism, with its strivings after unity, a blind confused religious impulse is at work. Thus collision between religious and theoretic knowledge becomes an absolute impossibility, so rapidly and entirely are the two spheres kept apart.

It is plain that this theory, whatever Ritschl's intention, can bring about no truce between religion and philosophy. The latter may indeed in the middle ages have surrendered its claim to look for a whole in things: but the entire history of philosophy is a history of its emancipation from ecclesiastical control, and of its determination to solve for itself the problems of ultimate reality. In other words, philosophy does seek for unity, and does aim at comprehending the universe under one supreme law. We must also notice the obvious inapplicability of this theory to polytheistic religions which cannot by any stretch of imagination be said to come to a

unified view of the world through the idea of the unity of God.

In later editions Ritschl considerably modifies his earlier view. We are indeed invited to adopt an entirely new theory as to the relation between theoretic and religious knowledge. It will no longer allow us to rest content with the pleasing delusion that "Christian knowledge comprehends the world as a whole, while philosophy fixes the special and universal laws of nature and spirit. For with this task every philosophy likewise combines the ambition "to comprehend the universe under one supreme law. . . . Even the thought of God, which belongs to religion, is employed in some shape or other by every non-materialistic philosophy."<sup>1</sup> The two spheres of knowledge can, therefore, no longer be kept utterly and entirely separate. Where, then, is the principle of discrimination to be found? As the distinction is not to be sought in the object of knowledge, we must seek it in the subject.

Herrmann, to whom the actual introduction of the term value-judgments is due, is a strong supporter of the principle of discrimination which Ritschl here adopts. The new theology, championed by De Wette, had grasped the symbolical character of theological representations, and was thus led not merely to a historical re-examination and reconstruction of early Christian history, but also into a psychological investigation into the functions of the human spirit. The progress in this latter direction has been so rapid that psychological science has assumed far different proportions from those of its

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii.

initial stages; and the merely descriptive type of theology has been discredited as insufficient. Religion was obliged to listen to the most gloomy and confident predictions of her own overthrow, if Christianity should prove unable to the task of exhibiting the entire world-view in a systematic connection. We can understand how anxiously the theologians sought for allies among eminent scientists and philosophers who, discontented with the disconnected results of empirical investigation, sought in religion the idea of unity which science and philosophy were alike powerless to bestow. But the hopes to which such an alliance naturally gave rise were more than counterbalanced by the extreme reluctance to make the most cherished truths of religion dependent on the successful issue of so precarious and far-reaching a venture. At any rate Herrmann feels justified in insisting upon a searching investigation as to the real place of metaphysics in theology. He begins with the obvious. By way of enlisting the sympathy of his readers, he introduces Melancthon as drawing a distinction between the imperfect idea of God given by reason and that mediated through the Church; and declares, though he leaves it uncertain whether he expresses the views of Melancthon or his own, that this latter idea of God is a matter not for metaphysics, but for ecclesiastical doctrine.

He then proceeds to establish another obvious conclusion—namely, that the idea of God, if given at all in metaphysics, must have a totally different significance to that which it bears in theology.

At last we come to the point. Religious ideas are



fitted to solve the riddle of the universe: but what relation do these conceptions bear to theoretic knowledge? The methods of modern science, resolving all qualities into mathematical relations, have given to man a dominion over nature. The feeling of exaltation thus inspired has inevitably led man to forget that the real discovery of modern science is the hypothesis of mechanical necessity, a theory which yet teems with countless contradictions, when applied to other spheres than that of natural science. Yet this view of mechanical necessity seems to be the practical postulate upon which all the experimental sciences are obliged to proceed, if they are either to progress or to succeed. No theory, however, could be more utterly out of harmony with the religious view of the world.

If, then, scientific and religious knowledge are opposed, there is equal opposition between metaphysics and theology: for in the former we seek after universally valid forms in which all being and happening may be combined without contradiction. For the correctness of these representations no account whatever need be taken as to the relation in which the things stand to our aims and wills, our weal or woe. This, on the contrary, is exactly that on which, in a religious view of the world, all depends, while the metaphysical problems we have mentioned are in such a connection a matter of entire indifference.

We have thus arrived at a stage where it becomes necessary to admit that religious knowledge is independent, on the one hand, of those mechanical formulas with which the empirical sciences seek to achieve their practical purpose of controlling natural

forces, and, on the other, of these metaphysical formulas by means of which philosophy seeks to penetrate beneath appearance to ultimate reality, and to resolve the contradictions of the world into a unified and systematic view of the universe. To such matters the Christian may be indifferent, as far as his religion is concerned. For Christianity is concerned with an ethical aim, and has a sufficient assurance in the certainties of religious experience. The Christian is content to know *that* God helps; he does not seek to enquire *how* the help is given. There is an irreducible difference between the feeling of the value of goodness, and the knowledge of facts. Every *religious* view of the world is an answer to the question, how must the world be judged if the highest good is to become real?

Any attempt to reconcile religious with theoretic knowledge involves only a μεταβάσις εἰς ἄλλο γένος which brings in its train nothing but confusion and disaster. How else could it be if the Gospel which is to overcome the world is made dependent for its success on a worldly condition? The Christian must never forget that the character of his conception of God and of the highest good would be less corrupted by insistence on Judaizing ceremonies than by a desire *in the interests of religion* to combine the earthly knowledge of the world with the supermundane idea of God.

We are thus reaching important conclusions as to the relation between these two forms of knowledge. "The consideration of the peculiarity of religious knowledge forces us to acknowledge that what we speak of as real in Christianity is quite different from

what is spoken of as real in metaphysics. It thus makes no difference to a Christian whether philosophically he is a materialist or an idealist.”<sup>1</sup>

“Are then metaphysics and theology to be regarded as hostile or as independent powers? There need be no hostility. In fact, metaphysics can serve theology most usefully in two respects. It should teach us in the first place to recognize the modification of our conceptions involved in the change of their reference to things and spirits, and, secondly, to respect the frontier which separates the field of independent knowledge from the dominion of the concrete moral ideal. For the rest, whether philosophy is deistic, pantheistic, or theistic, can make no difference to us *quâ* theologians.”<sup>2</sup>

It would not be easy to state the case more strongly. For the present we must defer our examination of Herrmann’s systematic defence of this theory, which he has attempted in *Religion in relation to our knowledge of the world and to morality*. His conclusion is, as we have seen, that the values valid in the Christian community, so far from being more fully recognized, lose their original meaning when by means of metaphysics we aim at transforming them into the objects of theoretic knowledge.

We must now return to Ritschl, and see how he himself developed this theory in the second and third editions of his principal work. We have seen that as in his later view the two spheres of theoretic and religious knowledge could no longer be kept entirely apart, it became necessary to find some

<sup>1</sup> *M. in T.* 17.

<sup>2</sup> *M. in T.* 21.

other principle of distinction. This means that the distinction must be found not in the object but in the subject of knowledge.

The mind, then, appropriates its sensations in a twofold manner.

(i) They are determined, according to their value for the Ego, by the feeling of pleasure and pain.

(ii) They are judged in respect of their cause, its nature, and in its connection with other causes.

These two functions of the mind—feeling and knowing—are never actually separated, but are distinguishable factors in an invariable synthesis; yet sometimes one, sometimes the other preponderates, and thus gives its own colour to the complex neutral act. Accordingly, from a psychological standpoint, we must distinguish between things (1) according to their worth for the subject, as susceptible of pleasure and pain, and (2) as objectively given, when the mind connects them as parts of a systematic unity of nature through the causal bond. The latter give us theoretic knowledge, the former find expression in value-judgments. Theoretic knowledge is based upon the knowing, value-judgments upon the feeling function of the mind.

It must not be forgotten that every kind of knowledge derived through our sensations is not only accompanied but guided by feeling (*"nicht blos begleitet sondern auch geleitet,"* 194). Value-judgments are therefore determinative in every systematic and connected construction of our ordinary knowledge, even should it be carried out in the most objective manner possible. For the wide and diversified field of scientific observation cannot fail to produce a feeling of

pleasure in one who devotes himself with enthusiasm to practical or technical pursuits. As a matter of fact no form of theoretic knowledge can ever be wholly disinterested : every such act is accompanied by feeling of some kind, and we are therefore led to make a further distinction in the value-judgments themselves, accordingly as they are classed as *concomitant* or *independent*. The former are active and necessary in theoretic knowledge. The latter are untouched by the theoretic element. For independent value-judgments may be said to consist in :

(i) All perceptions of moral ends or hindrances, as exciting moral pleasure or pain, more particularly as setting the mind in motion to appropriate the good and reject the evil.

(ii) Another class of such value-judgments is to be found in religious knowledge, which must be distinguished from the perception of moral ends, for it is only in the higher stages that religion is united with a moral outlook upon life.

“Religious knowledge moves in the sphere of independent judgments of value, which correspond to man’s position in the world, and evoke feelings of pleasure or pain, as man either with God’s help succeeds in maintaining his supremacy over the world, or is painfully conscious of the lack of Divine assistance to that end.”

Religious knowledge has modes of representation, has a method as well as a material, wholly different from those of theoretic knowledge, and at times the contradiction is manifest. Ritschl here is inclined to revert to his original position. Collision is avoided by a separation of sphere. The confusion and collision

between religion and philosophy has its invariable origin in the attempt of the latter to arrive at a complete and unified view of the whole reality : but in this attempt a religious impulse betrays itself which the philosophers ought to have known how to distinguish from their theoretic knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Briefly to recapitulate ; there are judgments of existence and judgments of value. The former deal with the objective nature and relation of things : the latter solely with their value for us, that is, their capacity to satisfy some want of the feeling self. This contrast between scientific and Christian knowledge consists in the fact that the former is accompanied and guided by a judgment affirming the value of impartial knowledge gained by observation and experiment : while in Christianity, religious knowledge consists in independent value-judgments, for it deals with the relation between the blessedness which God promises and after which man strives, and the conception of a whole to be found in the idea of a world created by God and ruled by Him in harmony with this final end.

It is in no sense Ritschl's intention to maintain that the mind is indifferent to the reality of religious representations : what he does mean is that this conviction of reality is not theoretically gained, and rests on other than theoretic grounds.

What then does the restriction of religious knowledge to value-judgments involve ? Plainly, it leads to the entire exclusion of metaphysics from theology, and in particular to the rejection of the theistic proofs, which fail to yield the Christian idea of God.

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 197.



Also it imposes upon theology the very serious limitation that we must not go beyond what God is for us to what God is in Himself.

The theory of value-judgments determines the character of the Ritschlian theology. As we shall see later, all doctrines are moulded in accordance with this central idea—the personality of God, the Divinity of Christ, the conceptions of sin and redemption, of providence and prayer. Before, however, proceeding to mention the objections to the acceptance of this all-determining doctrine, it will be necessary to see how it was developed by later members of the Ritschlian school, who certainly made great advances by way of conciliation, and also strove, not without success, to remove some of the more obvious difficulties and inconsistencies of the theory.

Herrmann, as will have been gathered from the sketch we gave of his position as laid down in *Metaphysics in Theology*, is even more thoroughgoing than Ritschl himself in his separation of the two spheres of knowledge. Three years after the publication of the book to which we have referred, appeared his work on *Religion in relation to our knowledge of the world and to morality*, which seeks to prove unequivocally that the objects of Christian faith do not fall within the province of our ordinary knowledge. What then is the principle by means of which we can distinguish between religious knowledge on the one hand, and philosophical and scientific on the other?

The answer is given in a psychological analysis of the human mind. Here we can distinguish between that activity of the representing consciousness which



is wholly uninfluenced by the feeling and willing powers of the mind, and that attitude of the knowing subject to the known object, when it ceases merely to represent, but feels and in feeling experiences values, and wills, and in willing seeks to realize these values. In the feeling of pleasure and pain the mind has a standard of values, belonging to an order wholly different from that of the representations in the consciousness.

It is a mistake to suppose that science and philosophy are themselves disinterested or entirely uninfluenced by these value-judgments. In science numerous conceptions, of which the unity and intelligibility of nature may be taken as examples, are formed and posited for the practical purposes of the subject; while metaphysics offers us an interpretation of the world, the content of which has no other ground of validity than its worth for us. If then in science and philosophy the value-judgments find a resting place, much more in religion do they come to their true home. Religion is unconcerned with the attempt to represent the world of experience as an intelligible unity: its interest lies in regarding the world in all its bewildering multiplicity as the means—orderly and complete—by which the highest value of the religious man (experienced in feeling) may be realized.

For man is conscious that he is the subject of an unconditioned moral law, and thus acquires a consciousness of absolute worth in himself. Conscious of his own worth, he has within himself a standard by which he may assign a true value to objects accordingly as they help or hinder his self-realization: and thus acquires the assurance "that the inmost

essence of the world is in harmony with his own demand for self-preservation."

This valuation cannot be regarded as an arbitrary subjective process, for it is based upon solid ground,—the existence of an unconditioned moral law to which we know ourselves as subjected, and the existence of an end recognized as one of absolute worth. Herrmann claims to follow Kant, and finds objective validity for his value-judgments in *rerum natura*. Religious knowledge gives a practical explanation of the world, which claims to be true though very different from the theoretical explanation offered by metaphysics. We cannot do better than quote the words in which Herrmann summarizes and explains his views. "When I seek to comprehend a world-whole because I wish to comprehend the multiplicity of things in a never failing content of law, then I go the way of metaphysics. When I seek to represent a world-whole because I do not wish to lose myself (as a person conscious of my highest good) in the multiplicity of things, then I receive the impulse to religious faith." In science and philosophy the real means the explicable: in religion the real means the valuable. This no doubt is true, but Herrmann will not allow that ultimately the explicable and the valuable are one, but maintains a double kind of reality. Indeed he goes so far as to assert that even the meaning of the word reality is in both cases different. Herrmann's conclusion is to find in the value-judgments the peculiar characteristic of Christian truth: for religious knowledge completes the moral personality, and elevates it over the world as final purpose, while the religious

judgments do not profess to be any more than the exposition of the one and only certainty that the significance of actuality is to be found in ultimate blessedness.

We may now leave Herrmann and consider Kaftan's contribution to the doctrine. In some respects the two men are widely different ; for whereas Herrmann is a Kantian, Kaftan is an empiricist. But in other respects, they are at one ; as in the importance to be attached to the value-judgments of religion, though Kaftan introduces considerable modifications of the language familiar to us in the works of Ritschl and Herrmann.

Kaftan's views are unfolded in his book on the *Essence of Christianity*.<sup>1</sup> The first chapter deals with religion as a *practical* need of the human spirit. He begins by recalling Schleiermacher's famous dictum that true religion is neither knowledge nor action, but a particular kind of feeling, and declares that this definition is the true starting point for a discussion on the essence of religion. In conscious dependence on Schleiermacher, he declares that the pious or religious consciousness is only capable of being experienced in individual feelings, or particular emotions, and that in them is to be found the kernel and the key-stone of religion. While admitting the impossibility of piety apart from all representations or theoretic knowledge, he yet insists that these representations and judgments only belong to piety

<sup>1</sup> The references are throughout to Kaftan's first chapter, which deals with the place of feeling in religion (28-37) ; representation and feeling, theoretic judgments and value-judgments (37-46) ; and value-judgments as the basis of religion, and religious belief (46-51).

because of the practical feelings with which they are united.

Psychology, which aims at reducing the complicated function of the mind to its simplest elements, shows us that the fundamentally diverse functions within the consciousness may be described as representation and feeling. The difference between the two is this: representation is the picture of another, while in feeling we become aware of ourselves as living beings. The appropriateness of the language used to express this difference may be called in question: but of this double-sided character of our inner experience there can be no question in point of fact. Our relation to the world has thus a double character, as we seek to know it, or as we are pleasurably or painfully affected by it. Corresponding to this double relation we find the further fact that all our simple judgments are of two kinds. Either they express a factual state which we represent, or they express a relation which we, as living beings, assume towards the former. There is, it is true, a third class of purely logical judgments which may for the present purpose be left out of consideration, as not affecting the real question. The theoretical judgments, then, deal with facts: the value-judgments express our attitude towards these facts. Psychology thus leads us to a two-fold conclusion. There is a double-sided character in all human conscious life. We stand in a double-sided relation to everything which exists for us, according as we view it objectively through representation, or subjectively through feeling. In our simple judgments this double character is seen again in the fundamental distinction

between the theoretic judgments and the judgments of value.

Having established his preliminary presuppositions, Kaftan proceeds to draw his conclusions as to the character of religious knowledge. If we analyse piety as inner experience, we find that value-judgments are ultimately the absolutely determinative factors in religion. For religion is a practical postulate of the human spirit, and religious knowledge differs from every other kind of knowledge because it lies on that side of our spiritual life where values and not facts are in the last resort decisive; it never springs from any objective observation, or investigation of nature, but invariably from the position which our practical interests lead us to assume towards the world: the conviction of its truth can never be forced upon the reluctant with the inevitable certainty of mathematical demonstration (as is the case with the judgments of science), but is a matter of complete spiritual freedom. This is the first and universal characteristic of all religion.

Kaftan has not yet, however, done with the value-judgments.<sup>1</sup> He distinguishes three kinds:

- (i) Natural—indicating weal or woe.
- (ii) Moral—good or bad.
- (iii) Aesthetic—beautiful or hideous.

The last class may be dismissed from our present enquiry, for, though aesthetic considerations have frequently co-operated with religious motives, it

<sup>1</sup> The second chapter deals with the highest good, and the distinction between the different value-judgments.

would be impossible to discover in history any actual religion in which the aesthetic standpoint was ultimately determinative. So Kaftan at any rate, but it is questionable whether the aesthetic standpoint did not exercise paramount influence in the final shaping of Greek religion. A further question arises as to whether the moral judgments may not be considered as a special department of the larger class of natural judgments. For reasons which will have to be examined later, Kaftan draws a sharp distinction between religion and morality. Every religion, he thinks, is concerned with life, not with perfect life: with goods or the highest good, not primarily with ethical ideals. The two classes of value-judgments are completely independent though not mutually exclusive.

Religion deals with man's claim for life: and thus it is that the natural value-judgments constitute the true basis of religious knowledge and of theoretical propositions concerning religion.<sup>1</sup> For it is utterly impossible to banish theoretic propositions from religion altogether. Thus every religion deliberately propounds a doctrine of God, which cannot in justice be called anything but theoretical. The point, however, to observe is that there is a wide difference between these and the usual theoretic judgments. The latter are the result of an objective observation of the facts and forces of nature, or of an intellectual interpretation of such judgments; but the former are entirely conditioned by the *practical* motive underlying all religious belief, and are based

<sup>1</sup> Cf. p. 210. "Neither the aesthetic nor the moral but only the natural valuation makes the fundamental character of life."

upon the natural value-judgments corresponding to the religious need.

Kaftan modifies the language of Ritschl. This is clearer in the first edition than in the second. "Nowhere have I affirmed that the religious judgments *are* value-judgments: indeed I hold this expression itself open, at least, to misunderstanding: on the contrary value-judgments are their basis, but they themselves are theoretical propositions."<sup>1</sup> In a more recent utterance he states: "I have never regarded the difference between Ritschl and myself on this subject as one of principle, or generally of substance. I have never said more than that his mode of expression was liable to be misunderstood."<sup>2</sup>

We have now come to the most serious problem of all in connection with the value-judgments. How, and in what degree can they claim objective truth?

The propositions of faith are intended to express an actual, objectively given state of things. Man seeks for help and comfort in his faith: but how could he do so, if that faith were all the while suspected of being an illusion. Where faith ends, religion itself must have an end. But religion answers to man's highest needs, and therefore must be true; yet it is plain that religion without some such faith, as *e.g.* a belief in God, is a contradiction in terms, and can never have any actual existence. It is, however, important to note, that this claim to objective truth extends only to the kernel of religion, and not to the particular propositions in which it is

<sup>1</sup> *Das Wesen der christlichen Religion* (1st ed.), 38.

<sup>2</sup> *Theol. Lit. Zeit.* 1895.



formulated. The concern of religion is with man's goods, life that is, and not with aesthetic emotions nor merely with the realization of ethical ideals. Therefore its own practical nature necessitates and guarantees the certainty of the religious man as to the objective reality of his faith.

The objectivity of religious truth is thus grounded in the subjective pious consciousness, which is, however, itself a universal and objective fact. In speaking of religious knowledge, we must be careful to remember that we do not mean an objective knowledge concerning religion, but the knowledge, which justifies religion from our own personal standpoint, a knowledge which is rooted in faith. Knowledge can only mean the appropriation to oneself of particular judgments, or their further combination with the consciousness that they are true. Hence it would be impossible for religion to arise at all, impossible to become the subjective truth in man, without man thereby receiving knowledge.

The peculiarity of religious knowledge is to be found in three respects :

(i) It is penetrated through and through with subjective conditions. It is subjectively conditioned because religious knowledge can only exist, when the feelings or the will are moved. Thus the personal interests which as a rule disturb knowledge, are here its very foundation.

(ii) The subjective side of knowledge is of such a character that it includes the strongest possible interest in its objective reality. For on the answer to the question as to its truth depends man's highest interest, namely life and blessedness.

(iii) The object of religious knowledge is of all things the most objective. Religious knowledge is the knowledge of God.

Religious knowledge is therefore differentiated from all other forms of knowledge. It is something entirely *sui generis*. It rests on faith, and becomes part of our inner conviction in a manner wholly different from our ordinary knowledge.

Kaftan seems thus to have led us to a position not very different from that of Herrmann. But in a concluding summary he says with emphasis: "Truth is truth. It never means anything else than that our judgments correspond to the objective state of affairs, which is entirely independent of us, and of our opinion. Of a double truth there can be no mention."

Yet there are different ways of reaching truth; one man is guided by facts, while the other follows a definite judgment of value. The various attempts at harmonizing science and religion prove that man is himself one, and can never rest content with any idea of a double truth.

How then can science and religion be brought into harmony? We can either assume that ultimately science will lead to the same result as religious faith; or we can show that the interests and impulses of science are only a single part of that process of life out of the whole of which religion springs. The former alternative cannot be maintained. There are indeed no limits to the extension of our scientific knowledge: but the truths of religion have never been and can never be reached along this road.

Kaftan having assured us of the unity of knowledge, now proceeds to assert that the representation that one can reach the same truth by different ways, is false. As the ways are different, so also is the truth to which they lead. Unity can only be reached by asserting, that knowledge and science must be subordinated to that highest purpose of life to which we as Christians can give, in religion and through religious belief, unity and coherence.

We have dwelt at some length on Kaftan's contribution to the Ritschlian theology in this respect: for he is aware of the difficulties inherent in Ritschl's and Herrmann's presentation of the doctrine, and seeks to remove them by an independent restatement. We have also outlined his treatment of the distinction between religious and scientific knowledge in this place, because his theories spring naturally out of his analysis of value-judgments; while Ritschl begins with an "Erkenntniss-theorie," and only subsequently discusses the judgments of value. Kaftan's position is this; conviction of religious truth cannot be forced by an appeal to sound powers of perception or reasoning; but must simply be accepted in the recognition of its *value*: and the test of religious truth is not its correspondence with scientific facts, but whether it can really bestow the good which it promises.

The highest truth can never be known by the scientific method: for in highest knowledge, values and not facts are ultimately decisive.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE JUDGMENTS OF VALUE

#### II

THE theory of value-judgments plays so important and extensive a part in that theory of the essential difference between religious and theoretic knowledge which is the pivot of the Ritschlian theology, that we may be excused if, after indicating the position of the older members of the school, we pay some attention to the more recent developments of the doctrine in the hands of the younger representatives of the party.

Otto Ritschl, the son and the biographer of the founder of the school, has devoted a book entirely to the subject: *Concerning Value-judgments*. It was published in 1895, and deals with the question with commendable thoroughness. Otto Ritschl begins with a historical retrospect. It is the boast of the school to be the only true representative of Lutheranism, the only adequate exponent of the spirit of Protestantism. Accordingly, in all their writings, the apologetic note is greatly in evidence. Elaborate efforts are continually made in order to prove that the sayings and writings of Luther are

manifest anticipations of the Ritschlian theology. So in this historical retrospect we begin with Luther. He certainly insisted with vehemence on the incomparable interest of the objects of faith for the religious subject; thereby drawing an implicit and far-reaching distinction between the disinterested character of scientific knowledge, and religious knowledge, which from its very nature constituted an appeal to the very strongest interests of mankind. Passing from Luther to Kant, we find the latter not merely distinguishing between pure and practical reason, but between relative and inner value. In Herbart, the contrast is more clearly brought out. On the one hand we have theoretical representations, where the subject may be considered indifferent: on the other there are the aesthetic judgments which express a spontaneous though often involuntary preference or rejection. Herbart insists that religion, if it is to be morally effective, must make an aesthetic impression as well as a moral appeal. But it is in De Wette that the process of valuation is first definitely recognized as a motive to action. He traces the different stages of such value-judgments from the sensuous to the spiritual, and concludes by identifying religious faith with the highest judgment of worth. It is, however, when we come to Lotze that we recognize the real source of the Ritschlian theory. The value, he explains, does not lie in the thing itself, but exists only in a feeling of pleasure or pain, in which the thing plainly cannot participate. The capacity of valuation by the feelings of the subject possesses as authoritative a revelation of the world, as the laws of reasoning afford an indispensable

instrument of experience. There is a world of forms which must be distinguished from a world of values, which may in their turn be identified with a world of ends. We have seen in an earlier chapter how repeatedly Lotze emphasizes the difference between a religious and a merely intellectual view of the world, and how frequently various representations are put aside as having no significance for religious feeling, or as failing to provide an answer to the religious need.

Otto Ritschl next proceeds to give a psychological analysis of the value-judgment. The mind of man includes within itself the three functions of thinking, feeling, and willing; and as the mind is one, it follows that no one function can be exercised entirely apart from the others. In illustration of this it may be pointed out how very few men are fitted for purely intellectual pursuits, where reason should banish all traces of emotion or volition. It is in the experience of childhood passing into maturer years, that we can best trace the development and significance of the value-judgments. At first we experience the liveliest sensations of pleasure or pain: that is to say, we regard the object from the point of view of its value for the feeling self. Repeated similar impressions harden into familiarity; and judgments of value are swallowed up in judgments of custom. At this stage the reason intervenes, and abstracting as far as possible from aught that may be due to emotion or volition, gives rise to theoretical judgments, where the emotional loss is compensated for by the moral gain.

Applying this to religious knowledge, we should say that just as in childhood our capacity for forming

judgments of value is the greatest—a capacity blunted by the weight of custom, no less than by the advancing power of abstract thought,—so also we have the best authority for stating that this childlike spirit is characteristic of religion. For religion is most closely related to the emotional and volitional sides of our nature; and not only does not depend upon, but is in the highest degree unfavourably affected by, the exclusive use of our intellectual functions. We expect help from God, and therefore we exercise faith in God: our faith gives us this confidence in His power and will to help, and therefore we value our faith. Upon the value to us of our faith, all further developments of our religious life ultimately depend.

This naturally leads to the consideration of the two objections which inevitably suggest themselves as fatal to any such theory.

(i) What then becomes of the objective character of religious knowledge? Does not this theory destroy all possibility of objective validity in religious truth?

The answer is on the lines familiar to us. A distinction must be drawn between religious and scientific knowledge. Faith assumes reality: that the assumption is not ill-grounded, may be seen in the fact that it is perpetually verified and vitalized in Christian experience. Both in theoretical and in value-judgments we assume the reality of the things: but while in the one case we express their relation to ourselves as known in our feelings, in the other we express their nature as discovered by observation.

There is another difference. Religious knowledge can never be universally accepted to the same degree as scientific propositions. *For the values of religion*



*must be felt in the heart before they are accepted by the head*: while the truths of science offer mathematical demonstration to all and any possessed of sound powers of ordinary perception or inference.

(ii) The second objection insists that this distinction between theoretic and religious judgments involves the idea of a double truth. This is denied: for their sphere is so wide apart that no collision can possibly ensue. Science and religion may indeed be regarded as complementary, as allies: for religion gives moral qualities and spiritual powers which science would gladly avail herself of, but is powerless to bestow; while science is daily adding fresh treasures to our stores of knowledge by means of which man's vocation shall be fulfilled.

Otto Ritschl's work is of value in more ways than one. In particular, he affirms without hesitation that the judgments of value are judgments of existence also: and that the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge is not to be sought in a double reality, but in the manner in which the thing is regarded, objectively as it is in itself, and subjectively as it is of value for us.

Admitting our desire to reach objectivity, he bids us find the same in history, a study whereof shows not only the high spiritual value to be attached to all religions, but also proves that that religion is the highest in which the objects of faith have proved and must prove themselves as the most strong, the most pure, the most real. This proof leads us to Christianity. We know that the Christian religion must triumph, not merely because in our own experience we have proved the power and tested the truth of its promises;

but because the hope of ultimate victory is essential to the Christian religion, and to abandon the hope would be equivalent to denying the religion. Both must live or perish together. The best proof of Christian truth is Christian life: and were this practical proof more in evidence, the demand for theoretical demonstration would cease.

A somewhat similar apology for value-judgments has been put forward by Max Scheibe in a work entitled, *The Significance of Judgments of Value for Religious Knowledge* (1893). A value-judgment, according to Scheibe, is one in which the object is measured by a standard, and this standard is not in the object but in ourselves; for we can set up standards of value, not merely as beings who know but who also feel. Judgments of this nature may be divided into three classes; hedonistic, aesthetic, and moral. The latter are not determined by any individual wilfulness, but are expressions of the universal spirit of God in our hearts and consciences. Of course these moral judgments being so closely related to the character and personality of the subject may easily be obscured by individual inclinations. But the point is that they are in no sense the result of logical demonstration, but the outcome of personal experience. They are of the heart and not of the head: and therefore their truth is not less but more certain than if their appeal was made to the reason only.

Concerning religious judgments, Scheibe accepts Schleiermacher's definition, and considers religion to be found in the consciousness of humble dependence upon God, and in living communion with Him. There is in the human heart a need of God, without

which it cannot be still; religious knowledge is designed to show us the way in which this need may be satisfied.

Scheibe follows Kaftan closely, and is dissatisfied with Ritschl's language on the subject of religious knowledge. The value-judgments of religion do not, he says, merely affirm effects within us, but also *the causes of those effects* without us. So the religious judgments are not indifferent to the divine nature in which alone can be found an explanation of the divine operations. Thus they affirm transcendental reality, and to this extent are judgments of existence as well as judgments of value; and the knowledge they give is not merely practical but theoretical also. Ritschl stated that religious knowledge consisted of value-judgments, but Scheibe considers this expression to be misleading and inappropriate. The mode of expression is at fault, not the doctrine itself; for Scheibe is clear that Ritschl did not intend to deny real existence to the objects of faith, but only to affirm their permanent value. God cannot be known in Himself apart from the manifestations of the divine activities. Yet it is not these operations themselves that are the object of faith, rather it is God in His divine nature Who is Himself their cause and their end. We are consequently obliged to assume the divine nature to be assured of the reality of the divine operations. For it would be impossible to attribute religious value to anything whose existence we could either doubt or deny. Religious judgments, no less than theoretical, predicate existence and affirm reality. Wherein then lie the grounds of their distinction? There are two points in which they

may be sharply distinguished—they differ in origin, and they differ in certainty.

(i) They differ in origin—for while in scientific research personal interest must as far as possible be eliminated, in religious knowledge personal interest must as far as possible be retained. Personal interest is in fact necessary for religion, and for religious knowledge, while in science its introduction only darkens knowledge. It is a practical necessity that drives man to religion: for it is only in the recognition of God's existence and His supra-mundane kingdom that man's personality and ideals can be preserved. The judgments of religion therefore are not value-judgments but postulates based on value-judgments: and these postulates are "not individual wishes, but universal necessities."

(ii) They differ in certainty. In science the certainty arises from the nature of the object, in religion from that of the subject. For science bases its appeal to be accepted as the truth on the necessity of the case: religion on its ability to supply our needs; that is, on its value for our own personal experience.

Religious and theoretic knowledge must thus be carefully distinguished both in their origin and in their certainty; but here our author parts company with the earlier Ritschlians. Herrmann's solution is explicitly repudiated: for however different the two kinds of knowledge, they both belong ultimately to the same province. "Reality can never mean anything else than actual existence irrespective of our ideas, and truth than the correspondence of our knowledge with the reality. There are not two realities

and two truths; but only two ways to the knowledge of the one reality and one truth."

A further question still remains. Are these two ways, as Ritschl holds, mutually exclusive? or do they admit of reconciliation? Scheibe answers the latter question in the affirmative. The contrast between nature and spirit is only denied in a wholly materialistic metaphysic, while the metaphysical conception of the absolute is in no sense whatever incompatible with the Christian idea of God. There are two standpoints from which it is possible to deduce a view of the world—the causal and the teleological: but these do not contradict each other. The latter, which includes the distinctively religious view of things, is compelled to employ the categories of the former: while the causal conception takes no account of aesthetic, moral, and religious ideals, and is therefore incapable of offering a complete view of the universe.

It will thus be seen that religious knowledge is not wholly independent of metaphysical enquiry: for metaphysic settles the meaning of the categories which religion must employ, if it is to present its credenda in an intelligible form. This however is a very different thing from saying that religion is susceptible of scientific proof. Such a proof there is not nor can there be: for in religion the experiences of worth must precede the apprehension of truth. Science can show that there is no necessary conflict between religion and itself, and "that a particular religion is best suited to fill up the gaps science leaves, and to satisfy the demands of the understanding which it cannot meet by its own means and powers."

We may finally refer to the irenical standpoint

occupied by Max Reischle. In his *Few words on the controversy concerning the place of mysticism in religion*, the argument is indeed apt to lose itself in a series of over-subtle distinctions and complicated refinements, but he has given us a book which makes a real contribution towards the elucidation of the doctrine of value-judgments. We start with an important definition. "I assign value to an object of which on reflection I am sure that its reality affords or would afford satisfaction to my whole self, and indeed a higher satisfaction than its non-existence. The feeling of value becomes clearer and surer when it rests on a fixed value-judgment, that is, a judgment in which a predicate of value is assigned to any object."

Reischle now proceeds to classify value-judgments in an ascending scale as exhibiting greater or less right to the claim of universal validity. First come the hedonistic judgments, which may vary as they are either individual, collective, or general: then come the logical judgments, of which it is not necessary to take account in this connection: finally we are introduced to the ideal judgments. We pass through the aesthetic, intellectual, and ethical stages, until we arrive at the religious judgments, which may either be legislative or applied.

This may seem a sufficiently exhaustive classification: but there is more to follow. There are different points of view from which value-judgments may be determined. These may be divided into three classes. Value-judgments may be

- (i) Verbal—which give us the relation of value assigned to an object as predicate.

- (ii) Psychological—which introduce the element of personal valuation.
- (iii) Epistemological—which arise not from any necessary perception or reasoning, but simply make the attitude of the knowing subject to the thing known absolutely determinative.

These latter judgments, involving, as they do, that which is essential to the maintenance of human personality and freedom, can claim universal validity.

Propositions of faith are seldom merely verbal: more often they affirm a fact whose worth they assert. This, however, would not entitle them to be called either judgments of existence, or theoretical judgments on the basis of value-judgments. When, however, the judgments are the expression of personal conviction, they must be classed as falling under the psychological standpoint. But the value-judgments should most rightly be epistemological. For such Reischle has invented a word—"thymetic" judgments he calls them. They include the ideal, personal, religious, morally conditioned valuations. These judgments cannot be called subjective: they do not originate merely in the sense of value which the religious subject attaches towards certain objects whose existence he is driven to assume: but they are rather judgments of trust directed to normative "divine revelation."

But have these value-judgments universal validity, or are they not rather a device for evading the whole problem presented by the conflict of theoretic and religious knowledge? Reischle has a clear answer. "None of the more distinguished followers of Ritschl has fallen into this delusion, but they have occupied



themselves in the most energetic style with the problem whether and how the truth of the Christian faith can be proved." Some such proof is absolutely necessary if the supremacy of the Christian religion is to be maintained, and all Christian missions are not to be abandoned as without significance or valid purpose. But the truth of Christianity is incapable of theoretic demonstration: it is practical considerations that can alone prove whether a religion can be accepted as ultimately true. Man seeks for help in his moral conflict, and in Christianity alone he can find the help he needs.

Reischle denies emphatically any dualism in knowledge; for the theoretic and practical reason are after all both combined in a single personality, and therefore cannot contradict, but must complement, each other. By the growing harmony between these two faculties, the spiritual life gains unity; and the Christian feels convinced that what he has himself found of supreme value, must have that value for all, and that among all the activities religion is supreme. With this conclusion Reischle brings his pacific intention to a triumphant close.

In a later chapter we shall have to enquire how far these theories are an adequate explanation of the problem of religious truth and scientific knowledge.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEA OF GOD

“ALL religious knowledge is knowledge of God,” and the reverse is equally true—that all our knowledge of God is religious knowledge. As natural science controlled by theology is universally repudiated with well-justified scorn, so the Ritschlians contend should a “natural” theology be wholly rejected. It is no mark of progress to deride the one, and hail the other as a prophetess. Science and theology must be kept utterly apart: and religious knowledge must maintain its entire independence of speculative philosophy. This theory, it is plain, is likely to effect a revolution in the Christian idea of God: for it insists that our knowledge of God must be religious knowledge: and thus the idea of God must be purged from all the metaphysical speculations which through the course of centuries have come to cluster round this central doctrine.

Ritschl, anxious as ever to vindicate for himself the true Lutheran character, appeals to the great reformer in support of his position. “A knowledge of the being of God, as such,” said Luther, “as undertaken by scholasticism is without power to save, and destructive.” This is a statement none would dispute: but Ritschl’s views carry us much

further afield. A *merely* intellectual knowledge of God has never claimed the power to save the soul; even divine revelation itself cannot profit unless "it be mixed with faith in them that hear it": but it is quite another thing to say that such intellectual knowledge either cannot exist at all, or at any rate can achieve nothing even in its own sphere. Religion cannot be wholly indifferent to reason: and if reason leads to God, it is preposterous that religion should affect to ignore, rather than rejoice to welcome, her conclusions.

Notwithstanding, Ritschl is determined, not to prove the superiority of religious knowledge over theoretic, but to deny the right of reason to say anything whatever concerning those things which constitute the objects of religious belief. Ritschl enumerates the fundamental presuppositions of justification and reconciliation under the three headings of the doctrine of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of sin.

He begins the discussion of those three great doctrines by emphasizing the peculiar character of religious knowledge and elaborating the theory of value-judgments which places the distinction between the two kinds of knowledge not in the object but in the subject. He next proceeds to apply himself to the exposition of the Doctrine of God as he conceives it, opening with a discussion of the theoretic proofs of the existence of God.

Since the Middle Ages, Ritschl explains, these arguments have been intended to prove that the idea of God given in Christianity is scientifically valid. This attempt does not imply that the reality of God

for faith is uncertain, or that as a religious idea it excites doubts as to its own truth, which another kind of knowledge was needed to allay. On the contrary, the Schoolmen regarded the existence of God as entirely beyond the possibility of doubt. All they wished to show was that the Christian idea of God is valid also in the realm of science. Ritschl insists that these proofs are incapable of proving the objective existence of God, but only His existence for thought, and that they cannot be constructed save in dependence on the very presupposition which distinguishes the Christian view of the world from that of science.

With regard to the cosmological and teleological arguments, they are themselves the products of religion. For the desire to comprehend the world as a whole is something over and above disinterested science, and betrays the interest of religious faith. The two arguments are merely the expression of the conviction that *if* we are to know the world as a whole, we must of necessity think of God as first cause and final end: but they give us absolutely no security that anything real corresponds to our thoughts. The thoughts themselves are only necessary under the given conditions.

The ontological proof is supposed to fill up the gap, but—whether in the form adopted by Anselm that the idea of a perfect being compels us to predicate its existence, or in Descartes' modification of the argument that we could not have the idea of the infinite unless it were called forth in us by the Infinite itself—it is valid only for our thoughts, not for a reality transcending thought.

Ritschl's criticism is neither convincing nor consistent; it is beyond the scope of this essay to indicate the forms in which the three "proofs" may still be considered valid for human thought: but Ritschl's inconsistencies may be pointed out.

(i) It is of course agreed on all hands that these theoretic proofs yielded a poorer conception than the Christian idea of God: and Ritschl has already accepted a fundamental distinction between the two forms of knowledge. It would therefore have been simple enough to have passed over the theoretic proofs as valueless for theology. By attempting to prove the absolute failure of philosophy to reach the idea of God, he is doing just what he has forbidden us to do, and controverting his own principles. For if a theologian may demonstrate not merely the relative inadequacy but the absolute incapacity of metaphysics, it follows that a metaphysician may find his truest vocation in discrediting theology. It were folly, if the river is not to be crossed, to span it with a bridge over which we are ourselves the first to pass.

(ii) Ritschl himself employs an argument for God's existence which is not far removed from the ontological proof, the cogency of which he denies. "We must conclude either that the estimate which spirit (as a power superior to nature) forms of its own worth, is a baseless fancy; or that the view taken by spirit is in accordance with truth, and with the supreme law which is valid for nature as well. If that be so, then its ground must lie in the Divine will." There does not seem much difference between this and asserting that any conclusion which the human mind is com-

pelled to reach in order to give coherence and intelligibility to its own thoughts, must be regarded as corresponding to reality ; that things and thinking have a common ground ; that to abandon all idea of correspondence between intelligence and existence is to make shipwreck of knowledge. And what is this but the ontological argument ?

(iii) Still more remarkable is Ritschl's deliberate employment of the cosmological proof. He argues with vigour against Strauss's "new-found substitute for religion" in the idea of an impersonal universe. "Such a universe which is at once cause and effect, inner and outer, is, *ex hypothesi*, withdrawn from the conditions of scientific knowledge. This way of looking at things entirely ignores the fact that a law, or that which is constituted by law, points us back to a law-giving spirit and will." Nothing could be in more complete contradiction with his previous repudiation of all cosmological arguments. Dr. Garvie admits the inconsistency, and thinks that he has accounted for it by supposing that "what Ritschl forbids philosophy to do, that he will allow to theology."<sup>1</sup> This, however, is only an epigrammatic way of stating, not of solving the difficulty. Besides, it cannot be regarded as true ; for Ritschl will *not* allow theology to reach the idea of God by any metaphysical argument or method.

The theoretic proofs, then, stand convicted in Ritschl's eyes of absolute failure. Is the Kantian moral proof more successful ? In his first edition Ritschl recognized it as a proper and necessary task for theology to establish the knowability

<sup>1</sup>Garvie, *op. cit.* 83.

of the idea of God. He even goes the length of ascribing to the "moral proof" of God's existence, a theoretic character which Kant denied to it. He points out the consequences to be drawn from the moral government of the world, and insists that as this form of proof is not merely the product of religious reflection, but looks for its support to those incontrovertible and fundamental data of human experience which lie outside the religious view of the world, one can only conclude that "this acceptance of the idea of God is no practical faith, but an act of theoretic knowledge." In the third edition we have identically the same point of view, the same arguments, and—a diametrically opposite conclusion. For at the end of the reasoning, we are astounded to read, that "this acceptance of the idea of God is, as Kant remarks, practical faith, and not any act of theoretic knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

The explanation of this entire change of view may be found in Ritschl's own words. Theology has no longer for him anything to do with any scientific treatment of the objects of faith. Her task is now to guard the peculiar character of the religious idea of God which may only be expressed in judgments of value. All theoretic attempts to establish or confine the idea of God are doomed to inevitable failure because, even if they were right, they would differ from the Christian idea of God in failing to express the value of that idea for men, in particular, for sinful men.

Here a fundamental weakness of the Ritschlian theology discovers itself. Because science or meta-

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 191 (first edition); iii. 214 (second edition).



physics cannot yield the complete conceptions of Christianity, they are impatiently set aside as having no value for religion. Ritschl refuses to believe that any light can be thrown upon the perfect revelation of God in Christ from sources manifestly imperfect. Yet admitting the partial and fragmentary character of scientific knowledge and philosophical speculation, they cannot be blamed for recognizing the limitations imposed upon them from the very nature of the subject. It would be ridiculous to subordinate the Christian idea of God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to any scientific or metaphysical conception. But truth is reached in many ways: and wherever truth is sought, some light is shed upon the truth itself. To ignore, or reject that light because it is not the full light, seems suicidal: yet it is the constant attitude of Ritschl in his growing philosophical scepticism. Neither science nor metaphysic can give us all; but that does not justify us in scornfully rejecting what they have to offer.

But there is another form in which the moral proof may still retain its validity. Conscience is universally regarded as the inner witness to God, the voice of God. Ritschl examines this claim. At first he seems inclined to have accepted *ex animo* Kant's theory of an *a priori* unconditioned moral law, but at a later stage, as evidenced by his lecture on the subject, he regards conscience rather as an empirical growth in society and history than as the immediate voice of God. The common and perplexing attribution to conscience of thoughts and acts that do not appear to admit of mutual reconciliation, its singular development in opposite directions, the

influence of social habit, of early associations, of childhood's memories, of inherited prejudices that go towards the forming of national or individual conscience are not, and cannot be, denied. But the description of a process is not necessarily the explanation of its origin: and here Ritschl still leaves us in the dark, save to deny that conscience may claim directly and immediately to be the voice of God. It should, however, be stated that Herrmann's investigations have led him to a different conclusion, for he holds that in conscience, in man's self-subjection to an unconditioned moral law, we have a fact "independent of all psychological observation." It is in this fact, that mankind has been content to see the strongest internal witness to the existence and righteousness of God.

The idea of God corresponds to, and is completed by, a conception of the world. Theology has made two such attempts. The first theory sees in God the absolute sovereign over all His creatures. Before Him men as such have no rights, yet He out of His own arbitrary will treats them with equity. This Ritschl identifies with the Socinian theory of the moral government of the world. The second theory, which he calls the orthodox or reformed, posits a quite different relation between God and man. There are mutual rights to be observed, a kind of reciprocal obligation between God and man, which God has ordained by a law and life of righteousness, that are binding and necessary for Himself no less than for man. Ritschl criticises both these views with severity, but without offering any adequate theory to take their place. Ritschl is

obliged to admit that they both may claim on their side Scriptural representations ; but objects to them because their Biblical phraseology scarce serves to conceal their real origin in natural religion. The fact that Scripture may at times serve to support natural religion, tends not to establish the latter, but to discredit the former. It may be admitted that neither view offers a complete or adequate theory of the moral government of the world : but Garvie rightly rebukes the Ritschlian "tendency to regard as meaningless and worthless for Christian thought all that falls short of the full measure of the faith."

One by one, the customary proofs of God's existence and character have been examined and found wanting. There is, however, a fact of universal significance, of which account has not been taken—the religious aspirations of humanity, the universal consciousness of God. Whence did, whence could this arise save from God Himself, to whom it points? Ritschl replies with scorn: "If this alleged natural consciousness of God is to find its truth first by means of something else, then it has no truth of itself. It is in itself a false doctrine. Or is this natural theology to be reckoned a half truth until by the revelation of salvation it is completed to the full truth? Alas! falsehood on that account still cleaves to it: for what is truth cannot be added together out of different halves."<sup>1</sup> But this is not the language of the Apostle, "Howbeit, not first that which is spiritual but that which is natural," nor of the writer to the Hebrews who knew of the many

<sup>1</sup> *T. M.*

parts and many manners whereby God spoke to the fathers in the prophets : nor is it the language of the Lord who has told us " First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." It is the language of controversy which has substituted a mechanical and external combination of halves for a process of organic development. But Ritschl (as we might almost expect) is not consistent with himself : for he recognizes the genetic connection between Old Testament and New ; but are we to regard the preparatory dispensation as a falsehood because it was fulfilled under the New ? The lower truth is not false as long as it leads up to, is false only whenever it opposes itself to, a higher revelation. Ritschl admits an element of revelation in all religions, but this is unattainable without a universal consciousness of God. Ritschl also admits an ascending scale of historical religions : but he insists that the claim that in Christianity all of truth and worth in all religions is fulfilled and transcended, is only possible from within Christianity itself. From that height we can look down, observing the gradual descent : but from no other standpoint can such a claim be advanced or allowed. Any such argument would be wholly without effect in dealing with a Buddhist or a Moslem ; for such an argument *could* only be used as a particular assumption inherent in a particular religion, which the member of another faith neither shared, nor could share, while he remained unconverted.

The followers of Ritschl however take a far stronger line. Thus, as we have seen, Otto Ritschl seeks and finds objectivity in religious knowledge through the evidence of history that " that religion is

the highest in which the objects of faith necessarily prove themselves as real and genuine ;" and declares that Christians anticipate the triumph of their religion not only because they themselves have had inner experience of its power and truth, but because the hope of victory is essential to Christianity itself. Similarly Reischle realizes that Christian missions must lose their significance unless we are prepared to prove the objective truth and supreme excellence of the Christian religion.

All metaphysics seem now to have been satisfactorily excluded from theology : but in accordance with Ritschl's own declaration and Herrmann's suggestion it may be asked whether metaphysics may not have a regulative, rather than a constitutive value in theology, whether they may not determine the intellectual form of religious knowledge. The question arises out of the use of the term Absolute. Against the introduction of this word into theology Ritschl wages bitter and unceasing war. It is a "foreign importation," a "vitiating element." It is no product of religious reflection but a purely metaphysical conception. It means nothing but the existent—a term denoting the greatest extension and the least intension possible. The word absolute means set free ; and the idea absolute means something without relations, without determinations. Instead of the Christian conception of the Fatherhood of God we are asked to accept a Neoplatonic abstraction, making the Deity inaccessible to His creation, and contradicting those fundamental laws of the personality and love of God on which Ritschl so strenuously insists. Here again Scheibe and Kaftan

decline to follow Ritschl, the latter declaring that God can mean nothing else than the Absolute, the Unconditioned, though of course this is not in itself a specifically Christian doctrine.

Ritschl has criticised : let us now see what he constructs. The theory of knowledge which he adopts—albeit he calls it Lotzean—is really derived from Kant, for it forbids us to know that which lies behind phenomena. The limitations of our cognitive faculty render impossible the knowledge of any essential nature in God : we have only to deal with the divine activities and operations. A dogma attempting to define the former, speaks that which it does not know, in a language that none can understand. When dealing with the latter, it may either degenerate into a mere narration of the mighty works of God, or, if seeking to establish a systematic scheme of salvation, must learn to interpret the divine operations by an analysis of the corresponding self-activities by means of which man appropriates the gifts of God.<sup>1</sup>

What then can we learn of God? First that He is a spiritual person.<sup>2</sup> This is a point on which all Ritschlian theologians unite in insisting. Ritschl will have nothing to do with materialistic or pantheistic tendencies, and argues at length against the objection to the personality of God, that the predicates of the absolute and of personality are mutually exclusive. It had been objected that "Personality is that self-hood which shuts itself up against everything else, which it thereby excludes from itself; the Absolute, on the other hand, is the

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 33, 34.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 8; *R. V.* iii. 215-227; Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, 400.

comprehensive, the unlimited, which excludes nothing from itself but just that very exclusiveness which lies in the conception of personality."<sup>1</sup> Ritschl's arguments against this position are well stated and soundly conceived. He shows the impossibility of such an exclusive personality as the objection imagines. Personality, it is true, is conditioned by the natural endowments of the individual: but character is developed from this foundation; and the limits of personality (in the strict sense) are necessarily overstepped whenever a man assimilates any material for his spiritual development. If it were possible to live a wholly self-enclosed life completely shut off from all other influences and characters, development would be impossible, and personality without possibility of spiritual progress does not deserve the name. On the contrary the more open a man may be to the increase of knowledge, the more susceptible to emotions and influences, the more strong in the will power to change the course of things, the more truly may he be said to be possessed of personality. The greater the faculty of appropriation, the more marked becomes the individuality of character, and the more complete the idea of personality. From this it follows that perfect personality so far from implying limitation, points to the entire absence of all limitation.

The personality of God may be compared and contrasted with the empirical fact of human personality. It may be compared, in so far that experience and observation prove that personality is not the mere inevitable reaction to the stimulus of inexorable

<sup>1</sup> Strauss, *Die christliche Glaubenslehre*, i. 504.



environment, but rather consists in the power to control that which we have appropriated, to make it answer our own needs, or suit our own purposes. It may be contrasted, because we are always in a state of becoming ; while the personality of God is thinkable without contradiction, because in His case there is an entire absence of all those restraints that limit our own personality. "As the cause of all that happens, God is affected only by such properties as He has conferred upon His own creatures, and recognizes as the effects of His own will. Nothing which affects the divine Spirit is originally alien to Him : and there is nothing which in order to be independent, he must first appropriate."<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl has given us a powerful defence of the divine personality ; but it would be idle to call his arguments anything but metaphysical. He draws, however, an extremely far-reaching conclusion. "It follows as a settled result of the assumption of the divine personality that God is real only in the form of will."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, as we shall see later, God's purpose of love may only be expressed in terms of will.

God then is spirit : and God is personal. He must also be conceived as transcendent. The supramundane character of the Kingdom of God, which in Ritschlianism is *the* centre of theology, demands that God Himself should be thought of as above the world. This does not mean that He is the eternal ground and final purpose of the world, but that His own life and being can in no wise be confused with that of the world which He has made.<sup>3</sup>

This definition of God as the supramundane

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 224.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* 237.

<sup>3</sup> Kaftan, 400.

personal spirit marks the limits which no conception of God professing to be Christian may overstep. To identify God with the world, or to deny His personality, are conclusions absolutely contradicting the fundamental positions of Christian faith.<sup>1</sup>

Kaftan follows Ritschl closely but not blindly. While agreeing with Ritschl, to whose discussion of the subject he expressly refers, that the personality of God does not imply limitations, or contradict His supramundane character, he states emphatically that reason and will are in themselves meaningless abstractions: we know nothing corresponding to them save the functions of the human personal spirit from whose life we have abstracted these conceptions. Personality is therefore in no sense equivalent to will; the will is merely *one* expression of spiritual personality.

We pass now to consider the attributes of God. These, it must be remembered, are to be understood not in a metaphysical, but in a religious sense. Faith ascribes two attributes to God—omnipotence and a special relation to mankind. This latter may be comprehended under the designation of all-mighty and eternal love.

Religion offers man the highest good: but it would be impossible to rest content with a faith that doubted its own power to fulfil its promises. It is therefore necessary to our conception of Christianity, as offering us the highest supramundane good, to assume that God's power reaches over all things in heaven and earth, and that all things work together for good to those that love God.

<sup>1</sup> Kaftan, 402.

We thus come to the second attribute which faith must ascribe to God—a relation towards mankind. In Christianity this relation is revealed as one of love; and the religious good it offers is the highest possible, namely participation in the divine life. Thus this second attribute points beyond what God is to us, to what God is in Himself. God then is Love, almighty, and eternal.<sup>1</sup>

The religious thoughts of God's omnipotence and omnipresence have nothing to do with metaphysical conceptions such as those terms are often supposed to denote. Omnipotence does not signify supreme causality, nor does omnipresence imply presence throughout infinite space. They simply mean that the providence and gracious presence of God is absolutely certain to the pious believer, because the will of God that created and rules the world is directed towards the highest interests of mankind.<sup>2</sup>

The attribute of eternity seems to have had a curious attraction for Ritschl, who devotes much attention to the elaboration of his theory as to the meaning of eternity in this respect. In his *Instruction in the Christian Religion* he is, as we should expect, more concise. The eternity of God must not be understood, he tells us, as though His existence stretches out beyond the existence of the world without beginning or without end, as though God had another standard of time than that of mortals. The eternity predicated of the divine being means rather that in all the changes and chances of this mortal life God changes not, and that He is working out His unalterable designs to their foreordained con-

<sup>1</sup> Kähler, *op. cit.* 407.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 11.

clusion. But in his great work Ritschl's discussions on this subject are unusually abstract and unmistakably metaphysical. "Eternity in general is the power of the spirit over time,"<sup>1</sup> and instances are given where, by reflection or judgment, we are enabled to transcend temporal limitations.<sup>2</sup> Eternity is thus taken to mean not only that God is certain of His self-end and His world-plan at every point in its realization, but that "through the congruence of His knowledge, which penetrates the whole, with His will, which moves the whole, He is continuously conscious of the realization of the whole at every single point."<sup>3</sup>

With reference to this abstruse and complicated discussion, we may notice the extremely pertinent criticism of Professor Orr, who points out that in reality "it is the non-metaphysical mind which thinks of eternity crudely as time without beginning and without end: only by a metaphysical effort do we rise above this first view and try to frame a juster conception, be it that of Ritschl or another."<sup>4</sup>

It is, however, in the idea of Love, rather than in any of the previously mentioned attributes, that we must seek the true significance of the Christian conception of God. "Theology, in delineating the moral order of the world, must take as its starting-point that conception of God in which the relation of God to His Son, our Lord, is expressed; a relation which by Christ's mediation is extended to His Community."<sup>5</sup> The complete Christian name of God is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.<sup>6</sup> The

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 223.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* 286.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* 287, 288.

<sup>4</sup> Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, 111.

<sup>5</sup> *R. V.* 259.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* cf. *Unterricht*, 8.

name of God in Scripture is always used as a compendious description of His self-revelation—"quatenus Deus in hominibus cognoscitur et celebratur." The key to the relation between God the Father and the Son of God is contained in the declaration that God is love.<sup>1</sup> There is no other conception of equal worth beside this, which need be taken into account.<sup>2</sup> Ritschl here refers especially to the idea of divine holiness which in its Old Testament sense has, he thinks, no longer retained its validity for Christian people, while its meaning in the New Testament is altogether ambiguous. Even the idea of personality must be subordinated to that of love: it is merely the form under which God's will of love is best conceived.

Ritschl explains love to be the steadfast will to further another rational being, of like nature with oneself, in the attainment of his purpose in such manner that the one who loves follows in so doing his own self-end.<sup>3</sup> Love adopts the ends of others as its own, and so doing realizes its own ideal. We must then see first God's purpose towards His Son: and then, through our union with the Son, learn to see in that purpose the Love of God towards ourselves.

Kaftan arrives at the same result by a different route. Starting with the conception of the highest good that God offers to all believers, we reflect that the content and the value of any love is shown by that which the lover offers or attaches to the object of his love. God, manifested through Christ, offers us the supramundane kingdom of heaven: and

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.*

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht*, 9.

from the value of the gift offered we can learn the value of the love that offers : and feel that this is the only adequate determination of God in Christianity.

That God is holy, and that God is righteous are conceptions which must be strictly subordinated to the ruling thought that God is love. The attitude of a righteous God towards human sin will engage our attention in a subsequent chapter. Here it will be enough to state that righteousness is defined as God's consistency in carrying out His purposes of love. It is the same as faithfulness : and is stripped of its essentially ethical character. Kaftan also warns us in no sense to separate the holiness of God from His primary attribute of love ; but he does not suffer himself to be led into Ritschl's extreme position. The supramundane kingdom of God to which His love has called us, has for its earthly correlative the ethical kingdom in the world ; and thus to the love of God corresponds the holiness of God. This gives us the assurance that all our ethical ideals are perfectly fulfilled in God, and that He is the fount and cause of all morality. But we must be intensely careful not to regard this single idea of holy love as if it were two distinct conceptions, as though we could contemplate the possibility of a conflict between God's justice and God's love. Kaftan notices the objection that this theory makes religion indifferent to ethical considerations, but claims to have shown that the holiness of God is contained in His love, as is the moral ideal in the highest good.

The Christian doctrine of God is thus consistently developed along the lines of its practical value. A

theoretical view of God, bound up as it is with philosophical speculation and traditional theology, may at times appear innocent enough, but it ultimately makes a claim to a higher kind of religious knowledge to which it demands that the distinctively Christian conception of God's character should be subordinated. It is in order to emphasize the value of the distinctively Christian revelation in things divine as fully answering to all the practical needs of life that the Ritschlian theologians have demanded the recognition of its truth and independence, apart from any of those metaphysical constructions which as they are not themselves the product of religious reflection, so also fail to satisfy the essential conditions of religious life, and tend at times only to obscure, not to illuminate, the true propositions of Christian faith, whose reality and sufficiency are guaranteed and bound up in their own practical necessity.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE treatment of the idea of God shows that the Ritschlian school cannot be accused of unduly favouring any form of undogmatic Christianity. In this respect the whole school follows closely in the steps of the master who was above all things a systematic dogmatician. Kaftan in two interesting and important little books has developed the position of the New Theology in this respect. He insists that the Catholic dogmas are worthy of respect, as they had their origin in a sincere desire to solve the same problem which besets us at the present day, the reconciliation of faith and knowledge. Dogma was inevitable: for the Christian faith necessarily involves doctrine. Faith always gives some knowledge. It is by a common faith that the members of the Church are bound together: and this must find expression in a doctrine whose validity is generally recognized. Hence faith involves knowledge, and doctrine leads to dogma. The old dogma is discredited, we need a new dogma. What exactly this new dogma may be, is not evident. But the time is not yet ripe for it. At present it is needful to work at the foundations: but the need of dogma is

kept in sight; and ultimately the new dogma will emerge victoriously to claim the homage of the Church.

Herrmann in his later work on *the Communion of the Christian with God* seems prepared to accept the idea of an individual theology varying in accordance with individual idiosyncrasies, yet equally true, in all its forms; but in his earlier work he ranges himself on the opposite side. Meanwhile Harnack has with increasing clearness come to hold that in the Christian faith there is a dogmatic kernel which it is the task of theology to unfold. Arguing against Sabatier, he expresses himself thus: "The intellectual element within the Christian religion belongs to the essence of the thing itself, inasmuch as this not only awakens feeling, but has a quite definite content which determines and should determine the feeling. In this sense Christianity without dogma, that is, without a clear expression of its content, is inconceivable."<sup>1</sup>

There is, therefore, a general consensus of opinion among the Ritschlian theologians that the Christian religion needs dogmatic restatement: there is also a unanimous recognition that the idea of the Kingdom of God is the comprehensive, and indeed exhaustive category under which the whole system of Christian doctrine must be brought. It was Kant who first revived the prominence of this conception in theology. It will be remembered that Kant deduced the idea of the kingdom in two ways. In the *Critiques*, practical reason had led to the recognition of a moral end involved in the idea of God, and this involved the deduction of a moral kingdom of God, an

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *History of Dogma*, 21.

association of men bound together by laws of virtue. In his *Religion within the limits of Pure Reason* the same conclusion was deduced from the need of moral fellowship in order to secure the ultimate victory of humanity over the evil in the world. This teleological interpretation of the system of the world laid a strong hold on Ritschl's imagination.

Dr. Garvie insists that the true question for theology is what or how? not why? but many will understand Ritschl's sympathy with "a way of looking at nature and history, which fixes its gaze on, not the being, but the becoming of things, not their truth but their worth, not their explanation but their destination, not their ultimate cause but their final purpose."

It was this teleological aspect of the kingdom of God as Kant conceived it that attracted Ritschl most powerfully. Schleiermacher had also adopted the idea, but his method did not find much favour with Ritschl. For while on the one hand he declared the kingdom of God to be an all-important and all-comprehensive conception, he yet defines Christianity as that monotheistic form of faith suitable to the teleological view of the world, in which everything is referred to the redemption accomplished through Jesus Christ. In other words he is prepared to subordinate the idea of the kingdom to that of redemption, while from the Ritschlian standpoint it is clear that if the kingdom is in itself the final end divine, redemption itself should be subordinated to the kingdom, as means to an end.<sup>1</sup> Indeed it cannot be doubted that Christ recognized and made His own the divine purpose

<sup>1</sup> *Die Glaubenslehre*, § 9. 2.

of a universal moral kingdom of God, and that the recognition of this purpose definitely determined His choice of the manner of the redemption that He wrought.<sup>1</sup> Ritschl complains, not without justice, that attention has been too exclusively concentrated upon the manner of redemption, to the neglect of the ethical apprehension of Christianity, conceived as the kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup> Christianity should not be compared to a circle with one centre, but to an ellipse controlled by two foci.<sup>3</sup>

It should perhaps be mentioned at this stage that Ritschl sharply differentiates the moral and religious ideals in Christianity. The former refers directly to men and only indirectly to God; the latter deals definitely and solely with our relation to God and to the world. Christianity combines both ends: the moral end of human service; and the religious end of human freedom. The former is fulfilled in the kingdom of God; the latter in that sense of dependence upon God which God answers and rewards by justification. The kingdom of God, then, must be regarded as having relation to human activity, justification to divine grace. The kingdom is a purely moral, justification a purely religious conception. It is important for our present purpose to observe that this distinction is not only dropped by Ritschl's followers, but that Ritschl himself, in later editions of his chief work, profoundly modifies his former views. Thus in the third edition of *Justification and Reconciliation* we even read that "the kingdom of God is a directly religious conception."<sup>4</sup> In another passage occurring in a different work the definition of the

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii<sup>3</sup>. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* iii<sup>3</sup>. 11.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 30.

kingdom seems to be intended to include both the moral and religious interpretations. "The kingdom of God is the highest good assured by God to the community founded through His revelation in Christ: but it is to be regarded as the highest good only in so far as it is at the same time recognized as the moral ideal, for the realization of which the members of the community bind themselves one to another by a definite rule of reciprocal action."<sup>1</sup>

Before proceeding to outline the remarkable manner in which Ritschl deduces this idea of the kingdom, it may be well to notice certain statements of Herrmann and Kaftan which show the extent to which the kingdom of God is accepted by them as the regulative and determining factor in Christian theology.

Thus Herrmann in his work on the *Relation of religion to morality, and knowledge of the world*, asserts: "The idea of the kingdom of God is an invaluable moment of Christian faith—the kingdom of God, the universal moral community, the aspect under which humanity is comprehended in God's own self-end. The reality of the kingdom of God must have seized a man and have positively influenced his teaching, if he is to be capable of trusting God in the Christian sense." Again, he asks, "how is it possible that sinful man can seek his blessedness . . . expressed in the moral community of the kingdom of God, and to be assured of the same? Dogmatics takes the answer from the historical revelation of God: if this had not such a content, then neither our faith nor dogmatics would exist."<sup>2</sup>

So also Kaftan proclaims with eloquent emphasis

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, p. 2; cf. also notes *a* and *d*.    <sup>2</sup> Herrmann, *op cit.* 431.

that the highest practical purpose for Christians should be the coming of the kingdom in all and to all,<sup>1</sup> and begins that part of his book which deals with specifically Christian doctrines, not with the idea of God—that comes fifth!—but with the kingdom of God, preached by Jesus, proclaimed by the apostles: the idea in which religion and morality are fundamentally united.<sup>2</sup>

How then does Ritschl arrive at this conception of the kingdom? By nothing less than an astounding deduction from the nature of God. His method here is so entirely speculative, that we cannot wonder that Ecke regards it as one of the foreign elements of the Ritschlian theology, and points out that not one of the school have followed the master in his daring flight.

We saw in the last chapter the stand-point from which Ritschl approached the consideration of the Christian idea of God. In the formula *God is love* he found a complete description and determination of the divine nature and character. The implications of the term might have led him to an appreciation of the doctrine of the Trinity, but as a matter of fact it leads him to a very different conclusion. Realizing that love implies an object of love, Ritschl refuses to seek the fulfilment of love within the essential nature of God or as directed to the Second Person of the Trinity, the Eternal Son of one substance with the Father, but is borne along to seek the adequate correlative of divine love in a kingdom of God. Through this attribute of love it alone becomes possible to derive the world from God,

<sup>1</sup> Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, 224.

<sup>2</sup> Kaftan, *op. cit.* 225-270.

and to recognize in Him the ground of all that is, and the law that binds together nature and spirit in one all-embracing unity.<sup>1</sup>

God is love. We have seen that this leads to a recognition of the spiritual personality of God. What does it tell us of the objects of His love? Ritschl gives his answer under four heads—

(i) The objects of love are necessarily homogeneous to the loving subject, that is, they must be spiritual personalities.

(ii) Love is a will steadfast in its direction.

(iii) Love is directed to the furtherance of the recognized or surmised purposes of another.

(iv) Love can only be a steadfast will, and the appropriation and furtherance of another's purpose can only avoid separation and exhibit unity, if the will of love takes another's purpose as its own purpose and end.

Applying these principles to the idea of God, we cannot see the objects of the divine love in any indeterminate conception of the world, or of nature, for in no sense can they be considered as of the same kind as God. The object of the love of God must be found either in one or in many spiritual personalities who can thus be said to correspond with our idea of God. So far, we have been arguing in the boldest *a priori* fashion: but suddenly, without warning, experience takes the place of speculation. We could not tell whether the object of God's love would be one or many: but the world is a fact of experience; the world as a multitude of spirits bound together as

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 262, 263.



members of a race. Reflection on the world, therefore, makes it clear that a multitude of spirits bound together in a race is the true correlative of the love of God.<sup>1</sup>

This leads to a necessary judgment on the material world. Believing as we do in an almighty Creator, who is love, we must suppose that the whole creation and constitution of the world were designed by Him to further the purposes of the objects of His love, purposes which He has adopted as His own. Therefore the world wins its place in the great scheme of man's redemption. For if the idea of God is necessary to guarantee our individual morality and our moral fellowship, the purpose of the whole world must be recognized as in relation to the will and love of God. In other words, the world is the necessary condition of a moral kingdom of created spirits, and is itself created by God for this very purpose.

But humanity cannot be considered as an adequate correlative to the love of God. Its multiplicity binds it to the world of nature. It needs a unity, deeper than that of race or species. In the Christian community, which accepts the kingdom of God as its task, all conditions are fulfilled. It is the essential characteristic of the kingdom of God to transcend all national and natural limitations; as the ultimate purpose for the world, as also the highest good for all created spirits, it reaches out beyond the world, and is above the world, as God Himself. The idea of the kingdom gives a deeper unity than that of race or species, which after all is only superficial, and barely conceals the many underlying possibilities of

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 264, 265.

disunion which mark humanity as no real correlative to the love of God. The community whose vocation it is to be united in and with the kingdom, and to be active in the accomplishment of this task, owes its existence to the fact that the Son of God is its Lord, and to its willing obedience to Him. The love of God towards His Son, complete, unique, is through His mediation made effectual for those who believe on Him. God is love, inasmuch as He reveals Himself in His Son to the community which He founded, so that the glory of God or the fulfilment of the divine self-purpose is wrought out in this supramundane purposeful destination of mankind.

Thus the kingdom of God is the key to the solution of the problem of the world.<sup>1</sup>

But what is this kingdom of God? We will use Ritschl's own words. "The Christian representation of the kingdom of God, which has been shown to be correlative to the conception of God as love, denotes the widest possible union of mankind,—both intensively and extensively—through the reciprocal action of its members."<sup>2</sup> Professor Orr concludes from this and other similar passages, that "Ritschl viewed this kingdom exclusively under its earthly aspect."<sup>3</sup> This, however, seems to be an unduly severe estimate. Ritschl is at pains to describe the kingdom as supernatural, supramundane and invisible: though it must be admitted that the explanations he proceeds to give of these expressions go far to eviscerate them of their obvious meaning. The kingdom is supernatural because it transcends natural limitations;

<sup>1</sup> For this whole passage cf. *R. V.* iii. 262–269.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 270.

<sup>3</sup> Orr, *Ritschlian Theology*, 207.

it is supramundane because, acting from the motive of love, it is otherwise conditioned than by the ordinary natural causes. But yet in the sense that it is a task still to be striven for, we may regard it as, in some wise, future. For those who are united in it, the Kingdom is not merely a moral association of men voluntarily acting towards each other according to laws of virtue, but is the highest religious good also; for it solves the question with which every religion is confronted, how man, at once a part of the world, and at the same time conscious of his own spiritual personality, can give effect to that claim of spiritual supremacy over the world which in his former capacity he knows will be perpetually thwarted and in the latter be amply justified.<sup>1</sup>

The kingdom is connected with the historical Christ. It was His vocation to found the Kingdom. This is repeated again and again. "The task of Jesus Christ in His vocation, or the final purpose of His life, namely, the kingdom of God, was recognized by Him as the final purpose of God in the world."<sup>2</sup> "The realization of the kingdom forms the vocation of Christ."<sup>3</sup> Herrmann follows Ritschl. Quite incidentally, while discussing the natural impression we should receive from the claim of Jesus to be the Messiah, and from the entire difference between the Messianic expectations of the Lord, and those of His compatriots, and contemporaries, he alludes to the doctrine of the kingdom—"By it He understands the genuine sovereignty of God over personal beings, that is, before all else a sovereignty in their inner life, and in their mutual relations. To the kingdom of

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 17.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* iii. 426.

God, as He understands the term, those alone can belong who have fully placed themselves under His rule, in boundless trust towards Him, and in unbounded love towards their neighbour.”<sup>1</sup>

Kaftan, however, entirely dissents from this view. He rejects explicitly the view of the kingdom which, following the Kantian conception, identifies it with a moral community upon earth.<sup>2</sup> “The kingdom can in no sense be identified with the universal moral society which is being developed in the world, and in which all men are united by the law of love. As the chief good, it is supramundane and invisible, the kingdom of perfection belonging to the future, heavenly world.”<sup>3</sup> Kaftan, who frankly bases his conception of religion on a eudaemonistic estimate of life, sees in the kingdom of God the highest good that can be offered to mankind. And because the satisfaction of man’s claim for life is only possible on the hypothesis of an eternal supramundane kingdom of God, the latter must be considered “a postulate of reason, and from this postulate there arises the other postulate of an historical revelation of God, which has the supramundane kingdom of God as its content.”<sup>4</sup> But it must not be forgotten that this good thus offered is not upon the earth, nor of the earth. It is, in principle heavenly, supramundane.<sup>5</sup> Its perfection belongs to the future, and therefore the kingdom may itself be regarded as future, as belonging to the world to come.<sup>6</sup> Further it is not to be connected with the historical but with the exalted Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann, *Verkehr* (6th edition), p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, 234.

<sup>3</sup> *Wahrheit*, etc., 547.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 548.

<sup>5</sup> *Das Wesen*, 238.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 233.

*Your life is hid with Christ in God*, that is Kaftan's key text to which he refers over and over again. It represents the mystical element in religion which Kaftan refuses to abandon at Ritschl's bidding.

Certain difficulties remain to be noticed—

(i) No little confusion arises from Ritschl's conception of the "self-end" of God, and the final end of the world. We have seen that the divine love is to be thought as a steadfast will directed to the furtherance of the ends of those spiritual beings whom He has created. "As will, God can only be thought in conscious relation to the end which He Himself is."<sup>1</sup> Here we are at once in a difficulty from which Ritschl does nothing to rescue us. Ritschl accepts the definition, *God is love*; but will only allow it to be interpreted in terms of will. God's will of love involves the appropriation of another's purpose as His own. But why should the world have this particular purpose? Simply because it was God's purpose before it was the world's: and thus the self-end of God appears to be not to appropriate the end of another, but to prescribe an end to another.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, God is exhausted in His world-end: for "nothing can be conceived in God before He determined Himself as love. Either He is conceived thus, or He is not conceived at all."<sup>3</sup> We are not allowed to think of God as in any wise determining the direction of His will or Himself preceding it. God is practically identified with His purpose: and His purpose is the purpose of the world. As even Dr. Garvie admits, God is to all intents and purposes identified with, or rather subordinated to, the king-

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 262.

<sup>2</sup> Orr, *Ritschlian Theology*, 255.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* 268.

dom of God. It is the latter which solves the problem of the world, and God is Himself merely introduced as a means to ensuring the logical success of the deduction.

It becomes impossible to maintain a sympathetic attitude towards a theology in which "God is, so to speak, swallowed up in His activities."<sup>1</sup>

(ii) What then is the relation between the kingdom and the church? Ritschl strenuously maintains that they are different—and the same. The kingdom is the universal moral fellowship, the church consists of members of the kingdom united in prayer and acceptable worship.<sup>2</sup> Ritschl rejects the distinction between the visible and invisible church, but substitutes that between church and kingdom. That it was the intention of the Lord to found a visible society, or church, in which the members of the kingdom should be manifestly united, cannot be seriously questioned. That the kingdom is often conceived as invisible, as future rather than present may also be admitted. It seems clear that while sometimes they are practically identified, on other occasions a distinction must be maintained. But it must be very uncertain whether the distinction is properly formulated by Ritschl. The difficulty arises in this way. It is natural to use the word "community" of the visible church; but it is somewhat straining its sense to apply it to the invisible kingdom. Yet he uses the term so promiscuously that frequently it is impossible to determine whether he intends it to be applied to the church, or to the kingdom. He insists for instance on the theologian

<sup>1</sup> Garvie, *op. cit.* 62.

<sup>2</sup> *R.V.* 271; *Unterricht*, 6.



reckoning himself within the community: he also maintains that the community is the proper object of justification. It may be said that according to Ritschl the members of the church and of the kingdom are the same, and that therefore there need be no ambiguity. But Ritschl has introduced this distinction, in order to be able to distinguish between church connection and membership in the kingdom, ecclesiastical profession and true faith. Thus many might belong to the kingdom who were yet attached to no visible church: but what then becomes of the earlier definition by which church and kingdom were declared co-extensive? The indiscriminate use of the word "community" may betray a somewhat deplorable carelessness in the face of important and necessary distinctions, but it is perhaps unduly severe to demand absolute consistency in Ritschl, when the truth is that the Biblical representations with which he deals are themselves inconsistent. The objections to Ritschl's phraseology might with equal propriety be brought against that of our Lord; for nothing is plainer than that the kingdom is susceptible of very different interpretations at different times. That Ritschl was really trying to express a fairly obvious and orthodox position may be seen by a study of his essay on the visible and invisible church, where he distinguishes between it in its historical existence, and in its gradual development: showing that even in its visible capacity, faith is needed if the church is to be seen. The Kingdom of God is outwardly represented by the Holy Catholic Church; but their identification without more ado is simply disastrous: for the Kingdom both in fact and in idea is some-



times far wider than the Church. Nevertheless, it is to the latter only that the expression community is at all applicable; for in it alone can be recognized visible association of believers in common life.

(iii) The next difficulty arises from the difference of representation between the teaching of Jesus and the preaching of the Apostles. In the Gospels the kingdom of God is prominent; in the Epistles it is entirely in the background. Other conceptions have taken its place, and when the kingdom appears, it is in a predominantly though not exclusively eschatological sense. This fact has been recognized by the Ritschlian theologians. "It is not wonderful," says Harnack, "that in the oldest Christian preaching, 'Jesus Christ' meets us as frequently as in the preaching of Jesus the kingdom of God itself."<sup>1</sup> Ritschl himself accounted for the difference by showing that the practical interests of the apostles being bound up with the foundation of the church, the centre of gravity was shifted from the kingdom to the church, the significance of the former being transferred from the present to the future.<sup>2</sup>

Kaftan deals with the problem in a comprehensive and convincing manner.<sup>3</sup> The Lord's death had in this one respect been more successful than His life: for with His dead body had been laid in the grave all the false Messianic expectations which had clustered round Him in His life-time. The apostles were called to preach the gospel of the kingdom to the world as witnesses of the resurrection. That great event had revealed the real character and

<sup>1</sup> *Dogmengeschichte*, i. 70.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* ii. 295; iii. 270.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Wesen*, 246-262.

nature of the Lord. He had proclaimed that the kingdom had appeared in and with Himself; so also the disciples with and since the resurrection saw the kingdom of God coming in power, to be fully consummated at the return of the Lord. The preaching of the kingdom became in their mouth the proclamation of the revealed and risen Christ. The King takes the place of the Kingdom: but underneath the difference of language substantial harmony is apparent. For Christ is to believers all and more than all that the kingdom offered: and occasional expressions show that this formed part of the general Christian consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Such then are some of the difficulties, and such the way in which they are met, in the Ritschlian conception of the kingdom of God. It remains to offer a few remarks as to the place of this idea in any dogmatic system.

The idea of a divine kingdom is as old as the oldest idea of a divine revelation. The kingdom of God is one of the fundamental doctrines common to both Old Testament and New. The whole history of the Jewish people is the history of the development, purification and extension of this idea. It was along these lines more than any other that prophecy prepared the way for the true apprehension of Christ's work and person. And when the Lord came, He came with the message *The kingdom of God is at hand*, and His teaching is almost exclusively occupied in illustrating the principles of the kingdom, or in insisting upon the character required in its citizens and ministers.

<sup>1</sup> Rom. xiv. 17; Col. i. 13.

What then does the phrase exactly mean? Recent research leaves us in little doubt. From a linguistic point of view it may be considered proved that the expression "always denotes the rule and never the realm of the king."<sup>1</sup> Of course it must be plain that the idea of personal rule can never be so complete an abstraction as to exclude all reference to the sphere of rule; and thus that the notion of realm does sometimes enter into the conception of the kingdom. But it is only in a secondary and subsidiary sense that it so enters in. The important thing to observe is that the kingdom of God in the first instance denotes the active exercise of the divine sovereignty.

In ancient Israel the prophets laboured to set this great idea free from the national and political limitations with which it appeared to be inextricably bound up. Their efforts resulted in the possibility of its survival. Then came Jesus claiming to fulfil: beginning His ministry with the tidings of the kingdom's near approach, giving to the kingdom the central position in His teaching, and bidding His disciples pray, whenever they prayed, for its full and final coming.

It must now be clear in what sense we are to understand the expression as it recurs with startling frequency in the mouth of Christ. The kingdom of God stood for those principles of God's government among men, which it was the task of Christ to reveal, and the Church to realize. "Thy kingdom come" is an amplification under a slightly different aspect of "Thy will be done," and both are coordinated by the succeeding phrase "in earth as it is in heaven." These

<sup>1</sup> Dalman, *Die Worte Jesu*, 77.

principles must find outward embodiment in the community of believers, whom Christ founded and bound together in the common task of accomplishing the kingdom. These principles of divine action have already won partial recognition, and thus at times the kingdom may be spoken of as present, at another as yet future, for "*nondum regnat hoc regnum.*"

Viewed in this light, we see a fresh significance in the old Messianic titles, claimed by our Lord. And it is only natural that when He had been *declared Son of God with power by the resurrection*, when having conquered death He could claim all authority to be His in heaven and earth, the apostles should concentrate their attention on proclaiming Him to be *Lord of all*. The resurrection was to them before all else a triumphant vindication of the principles of God's government, and a crowning assurance of the ultimate victory of the kingdom. Thus believing, they proclaimed Christ as King, the fulfiller of the Kingdom's ideals, the monarch of an empire wherein was neither male nor female, Greek nor Jew, but a new creation. Preaching Christ, they proclaimed the Kingdom of God.

Under these circumstances we may indeed be grateful to the Ritschlian theologians for forcibly recalling our minds to this central and fundamental conception of our religion. Whether the idea of a kingdom is really an exhaustive category under which everything pertaining to Christianity may be profitably brought, is perhaps open to question. Notwithstanding, the term sufficed our Lord the Revealer, and it may well suffice the Church, the interpreter of that

revelation. It is astonishing that Dr. Garvie, generally so sympathetic, should declare the kingdom to be only "a provisional conception not universally significant."<sup>1</sup> He quotes with approval a saying of Professor Orr, "Either the doctrines are viewed only in their relation to this conception, in which case many aspects are overlooked which belong to a full system of theology, or a mass of material is taken in, which is only connected with the idea in the loosest way." But Professor Orr as a rule shows himself much more appreciative and sympathetic in this respect than his Ritschlian opponent. One of the principal merits he assigns to Ritschl is the new prominence he has given to this thought of the kingdom of God as a central idea in theology;<sup>2</sup> and again, "it is a merit of the Ritschlian theology that it has done so much to rescue this great conception of the primitive gospel from neglect, and to concentrate study and attention upon it."<sup>3</sup>

It must be admitted that Ritschl's use of the idea of the kingdom to determine the nature and attributes of God is not very encouraging. We have seen the extent to which these attributes were impoverished in the process; and as the discussion of these divine perfections is deliberately undertaken to bring the idea of God into harmony with the idea of the kingdom, there is truth in the charge of the subordination of the former to the latter. But we cannot allow that this is any necessary consequence of the position assigned to the kingdom.

To our own age the Gospel of the Kingdom comes

<sup>1</sup> Garvie, *op. cit.* 246.

<sup>2</sup> *Ritschlianism*, 23.

<sup>3</sup> *Ritschlian Theology*, 268.

with a message new and old. Old, because in very truth it is from the beginning. New, because the complexities of modern life call for a clearer recognition of Christ's living kingship in all spheres of activity and enterprise, and for a unity which will transcend the differences of race and sex, church and sect, in the fellowship which is more than ever essential for the defence and confirmation of the Gospel.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

ALL religious knowledge is the knowledge of God. We have seen, from the Ritschlian standpoint, what knowledge of God is given in the Christian revelation. Under the formula, *God is love*, we find comprehended all that is essential to a right and Christian conception of God's character and will. Here we see that God must be conceived as a spiritual personality: we see also how a religious rather than a metaphysical interpretation must be applied to those attributes of God—His omnipotence, His omnipresence, His eternity—which are necessary postulates for any faith which would maintain itself against the world.

But so far our conception is in no wise essentially Christian, and the Ritschlian school, whose strongest point is the completeness of the historical revelation in Jesus Christ, could not possibly rest content with such a conclusion. Religion must find some practically useful and comprehensive formula to express its idea of God; and in the Christian religion we are spared the necessity of inventing such a formula, for we possess it already in the traditional doctrine of the Trinity.



It does not, however, follow that we need attach the same sense to this doctrine as that which it bears in ecclesiastical orthodoxy, for all will depend upon our view as to the significance we attach to the Divinity of our Lord : but historically and practically the doctrine of the Trinity is a necessary consequence of the Christian view of God. For the Christian believes first in the Almighty Ruler of the universe ; he believes in the divinity of the historical founder of the Christian religion, in whom God has perfectly revealed Himself : he believes in the working of the Divine Spirit among men, which since the resurrection of Jesus has dwelt in plenitude of power and blessing in the Christian Church. Believing this, he believes in the Trinity. "The Christian has and knows God through Christ in the Holy Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

This belief, however, is practical and historical. It must not be conceived mystically or speculatively—a course which often enough leads to pantheistic constructions essentially antagonistic to the Christian idea of God. The dogma of the Trinity must be based on Christian revelation, not on the analogy of physical relations. Similarly all distinctions between an immanent and a revealed Trinity must be set aside as fanciful subtleties ; for knowledge of the essential nature of God can never be the subject of a formal conclusion which would require empirical verification, but can only be due to a speculative recasting of the Christian faith. The one thing to be avoided is to subordinate the Christian revelation to any other kind of principle which may be supposed to yield a higher revelation of the Deity.

<sup>1</sup> Kaftan, 412, cf. the whole section, on which the above sketch is based.

The ecclesiastical dogma of the Trinity was the product of various heterogeneous elements. On the one hand we may note the philosophical terms necessary for speculative construction, and on the other the Logos-conception which soon came to dominate Christian thought. The doctrine of the Trinity properly conceived is nothing but a convenient expression of what every Christian must believe. To exalt it to a metaphysical dogma of absolute truth is utterly to misunderstand its significance and to impose an intolerable burden upon Christian thought.

The attitude of Ritschl and his followers, therefore, is simply to assume the doctrine. Ritschl himself never discusses it or lays the least stress upon it. Kaftan dismisses it in a few pages. But the Ritschlian school, whose claim it is to vindicate the true divinity of Christ from metaphysical corruptions, and to be the real representative of genuinely Biblical theology, are committed by their claim to a general acquiescence in Trinitarian doctrine. Only it must be remembered that as a metaphysical idea the doctrine is regarded as of no importance whatever. It is merely assumed as an obvious and expressive phrase in which the Christian idea of God is conveniently condensed. Thus Ritschl accepts as the true designation of God the title perpetually recurring in the Epistles—"the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." This he takes as the starting point of all theology, for it describes the relation of God to His Son, our Lord : 'a relation extended through His mediation to the whole Church. "Any attempt to construct a scientific doctrine of God must be wrong

which fails to keep in sight all the aspects of this name. *Of the same significance is the name of God, as that of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*" The name of God denotes God so far as He reveals Himself. This revelation was effected through His Son, while the Holy Spirit is the power of God which enables the Church to appropriate to itself the Divine self-revelation.<sup>1</sup>

In the same way Ritschl speaks of the doctrine in the introduction to his *Instruction in the Christian Religion*. He claims for Christianity the proud title of the perfect religion. It is the perfect religion wherein a perfect knowledge of God is possible. Such perfect knowledge the Christian Church asserts that she possesses, for the Church traces its origin to Jesus Christ who as the Son of God claims this perfect knowledge of the Father, and she traces her knowledge of God to that same spirit of God in which He knows Himself. These indispensable conditions of the Christian religion find suitable expression in the baptismal formula.<sup>2</sup>

It may be conceded that this unquestioning attitude was that of the early Church. The explanation that the Apostles gave of this doctrine was devotional rather than doctrinal. We find the doctrine naturally accepted by many diverse writers, and, we may suppose, by the many diverse Churches to which their writings were addressed. There is not the least vestige of any surprise, such as must have been felt and expressed at the enunciation of any entirely novel and tremendously far-reaching mode of expression. It is all so quiet, so natural,

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 260.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 1.

that we are almost driven to assume that the earliest converts must have been familiar both with the idea and the terminology. But whence? There is not the least trace of any elaborate attempt in the Church of those days to construct a Trinitarian dogma or to impose the same upon reluctant disciples. The belief in the Trinity is intensely practical, not doctrinal nor theoretic: it is moreover so widely, even universally diffused. It is implicit in the very earliest writings of the New Testament: and it occurs in every variety of thought and expression—not as any authoritative doctrine, but as a devotional commentary, as it were, on the gracious operations of the Three Persons in One God for man's salvation. It seems an inevitable conclusion from these facts that the early Christians had been familiar with the formula from the beginning, that they had learned it at their baptism: that, consequently, the expression in Matt. xxviii. is not, as the Ritschlian school would have us believe, "kein Herrenwort," and only the result of ecclesiastical interpretation: rather that there must have been some direction of the Lord, thus expressed, to account for the wide diffusion, and the natural acceptance, of Trinitarian ideas and language in the Apostolic Church.

Now Ritschl and his school would have us accept the doctrine in the same way as did those earliest believers—but that is just what we cannot do: and we cannot do it, not because we are not willing, but because it is impossible. At an early stage it may be possible to remain satisfied with the immediate apprehension of a truth, but when once the intellect

has set to work and by a process of reflective analysis has broken up the seeming unity into its different and discordant elements, it is impossible without a surrender of truth to be content with the lower immediacy which existed before the intellect had done its work: rather we must press on to a synthesis which will resolve the diversities into a higher unity, and will restore, but in a higher form, that immediacy which we thought we had lost. The mind always wins its way to unity through these three stages: and it is impossible at any period when the process has once begun, to start all over again, as if nothing had taken place. But that is just what Ritschlianism invites us to do.

It was inconceivable that the doctrine of the Trinity immediately apprehended as a practical truth of revelation should escape the criticism of reason. For directly reflection began, the process of analysis had begun also. This necessitated reconstruction, fresh combination, a new synthesis, the knowledge of a deeper unity. When once this had been achieved, then it was possible for the Church to grasp the doctrine once more, but with a higher type of immediacy than before. The past cannot be simply undone with a wish: progress cannot be merely set aside. It may be a pity that reflective analysis should ever have touched the objects of the Christian faith; and that we cannot continue to remain content with that immediacy of apprehension at the lower stage which sufficed the earliest believers. It may be a pity: but lamentations do not alter facts. Reason has its rights, and critical analysis necessitated an attempt at systematic reconstruction. We

can never in this matter be the same as before : for the work of reason has been done ; and it is impossible even for a blind man to walk across a ploughed field and imagine it fallow. Ritschlianism demands an impossibility when it bids us return to the same position as the earliest believers. As a matter of fact, Ritschl and his school hardly seem to realize how soon the process had begun which makes such a return impossible. The Apostles themselves were at first content with the simple creed *Κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* ; but the words involved inevitable questionings which it was impossible to set wholly on one side. Thus Paul and Peter, Jude and John, all go beyond the simple statement, and see the need of explanation, of amplification, of definition and construction. The process was inevitable ; and the Catholic Church only followed the example of the Apostles when she, reluctantly enough as history shows, was driven into definitions whose practical need was as manifestly great and as imperatively necessary as the truths they were intended to safeguard. To ignore what was then achieved is merely to set back the hands of the clock and to show oneself incapable of appreciating either scientific method or historical development.

It was, of course, Christological problems that lay at the root of all Trinitarian controversies. The Ritschlian doctrine of the Trinity is the result of the Ritschlian conception of Christ. But this introduces so vast and complicated a question that a separate chapter must be devoted to its discussion. The rest of this chapter will be occupied by considering the Ritschlian treatment of the Fatherhood of God, and

the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as expounded by these theologians.

The Divine Fatherhood, embracing all mankind, extending even over all God's works, is perhaps the characteristic idea of more recent theology, which has made this conception paramount in all popular religious thought. It is strange that this view is strenuously combated by Ritschl. To him the true designation of God is "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." In the historical life of Christ we can see the true meaning of Fatherhood and Sonship. We see the filial relations perfectly realized in the loving submission of the Son's will to the Father. The Son makes the purpose of God His own, and in the carrying out of that single purpose, He shows perfect trust, resignation and obedience. To such a life God responds by declaring the full and perfect satisfaction of His good pleasure. Thus is established a relation of peculiar intimacy and love, in which we learn to see God as "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Ritschl's antagonism to anything of a mystical nature in religion leads him to deny any natural Fatherhood of God to humanity, such as might be based upon a consideration of the divine nature of the soul, or of the indwelling spirit of God. His determination to take Christ, and Christ only, as the principle of Divine revelation, leads him to limit the Fatherhood of God to the relation revealed as existing between the historical Jesus and God whom He called His Father.

But it was the work of Christ to make this relation valid for all those who accepted Him as their Lord.



Thus it becomes possible for all men to find in the community of Christ their true vocation to become the sons of God. On this point Ritschl is emphatic. "Upon the Son of God the love of the Father directs itself in the first instance, and only for His sake upon the community of which He is the Lord."<sup>1</sup> We may give one more quotation. "As Father, God is not in the first instance the Creator of the world, but the Father of Jesus Christ, and through His mediation the Father of believers as the children won to Him through Christ. *All men assuredly are not the children of God*, but only the members of the community who already through Christ are reconciled to God."<sup>2</sup>

It will be remembered that Ritschl in pressing us to accept the definition of God as love, insisted on our considering God not in His nature, but in the form of will. Thus the Divine Fatherhood in the Ritschlian theology becomes almost a synonym for the will of God. "The name of God as Father which Jesus also makes valid for the community of His disciples . . . has in this general application no other content than the creative will of love."<sup>3</sup>

The Ritschlian contention that to Christians God is pre-eminently the Father, is to be welcomed. At a time when the Fatherhood of God is thoughtlessly accepted as a self-evident axiom, it is a cause for thankfulness that we should be recalled to the fact that it is only through Christianity that the revelation of a universal moral fatherhood is possible. It is "He that hath seen me" that "hath seen the father."

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 441; cf. *Unterricht*, 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Leben*, ii. 199.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* ii. 97.

It is also well to insist that our relation to Christ is in no sense an assent to propositions however admirable, or conformity to law however excellent, but a life in Him. In Him we become the sons of God. In him we have access to the Father.

But Ritschlianism cannot accuse Catholic theology of neglecting either of these two considerations. On the other hand the Ritschlian interpretation introduces fresh and needless difficulties. The three most obvious may be instanced.

(i) "It is not easy to reconcile the restricted view of the Divine Fatherhood with the doctrine of God's universal will of love."<sup>1</sup> If the community alone is the object of God's love, what of those who are yet outside? The Scriptures give a clear answer—"While we were yet sinners, God loved us and gave His Son to die for us." But the Ritschlian theory gives no clue as to how the sinner or the ungodly, the heathen or the publican, may address the God and Father of us all.

(ii) The theory entirely fails to distinguish between the possibility of Divine Sonship by nature—that man, by his natural constitution, has kinship with the Divine—and the sonship of adoption and grace, corresponding to the new creation in Christ Jesus.

(iii) The distinction that Christ Himself draws most frequently and clearly between 'the Father,' 'my Father,' on the one hand, and 'your Father' on the other, is entirely ignored. The difference of expression to an unprejudiced mind conveys irresistibly the impression of a difference in origin.

It cannot therefore be said that the Ritschlian view

<sup>1</sup> Orr, *The Ritschlian Theology*, 115.

of the Divine Fatherhood is in any sense an improvement upon the form of that doctrine, as it is held by both Catholic and Protestant theologians. On the contrary it involves us in fresh difficulties which can only be overcome by ignoring their existence—a proceeding which can hardly be considered a satisfactory basis for any systematic attempt at theological construction.

We now pass to consider the Ritschlian doctrine of the Holy Spirit. This is of the scantiest description. Ritschl, it is true, recognized a supernatural power, a mysterious side in human life. But he concentrated on the active forms of its manifestations, in the most general terms, with a view to leaving individual development unencumbered. It is of no use trying, he would tell us, to answer the insoluble riddle how man is seized or filled with the Holy Spirit.<sup>1</sup> But it is conceded even by his defenders<sup>2</sup> that Ritschl lays himself open to serious misunderstanding: for he neither followed his usual methodical principles, nor did he essay the systematic interpretation of the critical passages bearing on the doctrine.

It was a great mistake of Ritschl's that he failed to distinguish between the mystical elements common to all religion and that false unethical view of the world which he called mysticism.<sup>3</sup> Ritschl rejects the Pauline text which Kaftan takes as the characteristic formula of Christianity—"the life hid with Christ in God"—and refuses to give clear theological recognition to the activity of the Holy Spirit as a real, immediately operative power in the soul of man.

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii<sup>3</sup>. 22, 23.   <sup>2</sup> Ecke, Swing, Garvie.   <sup>3</sup> Cf. Kaftan *passim*.

Two influences may be detected as contributing to this result. Ritschl adopted two views, both of which he held, seemingly unaware of their ultimately irreconcilable character. On the one hand, he clung to the *supernatural* manifestations of the activities of the Spirit, on the other hand, he took the *rational* view, which resulted from his recognition of the psychologically improved investigations into the being and working of the human soul.

Ritschl himself protested vigorously against the accusation that he had no doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He himself complains how seriously this doctrine has been neglected in the Christian Church, and contrasts with this neglect the position assigned to the Holy Spirit by St. Paul in his scheme of man's new birth and justification.<sup>1</sup>

Ecke, in an interesting discussion of this point, attributes Ritschl's silence to his marked reserve in speaking about inner experiences. Thus we hear little of the Spirit's power to quicken from sin; but Ritschl's denial of original sin has been thought to point to a different conclusion —that he was prepared to deny the power and presence of the Spirit in the human heart. Similarly by denying that the individual is the proper object of sanctification, he seemed to deny the sanctifying grace of the Spirit in the individual life. It cannot be said with certainty what Ritschl's own view of the Spirit really was: though we may admit that his reserved nature forbade him to speak freely of religious experiences in which the Spirit's power would have been unambiguously recognized.

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 569.

It need hardly be said that Ritschl would reject the doctrine of the Spirit which represented Him as the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Ritschl substitutes a strange, and it must be added, less intelligible definition. "The Spirit of God is the knowledge which God has of Himself, as of His own self-end. Holy Spirit denotes in the New Testament the Spirit of God so far as He is the ground of the knowledge of God, and of the specifically ethico-religious ideal in the Christian community."<sup>1</sup>

The Ritschlian School, however, go much further. Not only do they accept the doctrine of individual sanctification, but they are at pains to distinguish the objectivity of the Holy Spirit from the spiritual life of man. Thus Herrmann lays down clearly that "a Holy Spirit who was no more than the spiritual life of the Church, would surely not be the Holy Spirit of the New Testament. Nor does the latter conception correspond to the Holy Spirit which the believer has before his eyes, if he imagines merely an earthly power. The Christian who burns with the Holy Spirit, stands under the influence of a power high exalted above earthly possibilities."<sup>2</sup>

Bornemann is even more emphatic. "The Spirit in its clearness and power is only given to Christians through Christ: the whole true Christianity is a wonder of God, a proof of the Divine Spirit, of the Divine power working within."<sup>3</sup> Again he says, "The Spirit of God is that life in which God Himself and Christ are present to us." "He is the power on which depends the coming of the Kingdom, the

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 444.

<sup>2</sup> Herrmann, *Th. Lit.* 1891, 263.

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht in Christentum* (2nd ed.), 87.

assurance of Divine love, the activity of the word, the courage of trust, the renewal of life, the impulse of child-like prayer, the joy of service, the truth of our faith, the power of forgiveness, the understanding of love, the certainty of hope, the confidence of labour, the centre of Christian assurance, the fulness of gifts, the genuineness of Christian belief; the peace, joy, freedom and glory of Christendom and of every single Christian soul—on Him all depend.” The rhetoric of this passage will not blind us to the fact that the author has transformed Ritschl’s vague and unsatisfactory definitions into the ordinary expressions of orthodox belief.

## CHAPTER X

### THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST

IT is by its doctrine of Christ that any theological system claiming the name of Christian must be tested. *What think ye of the Christ, whose Son is He?* is the question to which every school of Christian thought must seek to find an answer. Nor can it be charged against Ritschlianism that it is indifferent to this momentous question. The Ritschlian theologians one and all insist upon the unique importance of a true understanding of Christ, for in Him as the sole revelation of God all true theology is centred.

Thus Ritschl begins his discussion on the person and work of Christ by affirming that "Christianity as an universal religion is so constituted that in view of the world a definite place must be assigned to its historical founder."<sup>1</sup> In this Christianity is to be distinguished both from all ethnic religions, and also from those other religions, Islam and Buddhism, which also lay claim to universal supremacy. With the utmost emphasis he repudiates the thought of a Christianity without Christ. He condemns the view that "Jesus taught a lofty morality, but in the exercise of this vocation never transgressed the limits of

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 364.



a purely human estimate of himself;—only through wholly extraneous influences have His followers been led to regard Him as the incarnation of the Deity. *This view is historically false.* For beyond all doubt Jesus was conscious of a new and hitherto unknown relation to God, which He declared to His disciples, whom it was His aim to bring into the same attitude to the world as His own.”<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore necessary for a right understanding of the origin of the community, and for our proper participation in the same, to recognize and to understand the enduring relation between the community of the Kingdom of God and its founder Jesus Christ.<sup>2</sup>

There are two aspects from which Christians may approach the figure of the historical Christ.

(i) In Christianity the aim of the Christian is conceived as the attainment of eternal life. The religious vocation of the members of the Christian community is prefigured in the person of its founder, and rests upon His power and presence as its abiding source of strength.<sup>3</sup> Thus the ideal of self-realization is bound up in Christianity as the perfect religion.

(ii) But Christianity embodies also the perfect revelation. Islam makes the same claim, but being content to acknowledge Mahomet as only a prophet under God it is content with a more or less superficial and imperfect recognition of its founder. Christ claims that He brings the perfect revelation of God, so that beyond what He brings, no further revelation is conceivable or to be expected.<sup>4</sup>

That Christ, then, on the one hand is the perfect revealer of God, on the other, the type of spiritual

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 365.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 15.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* iii. 366.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 367.

lordship over the world, is expressed by attributing to Him the predicate of Godhead.

The Godhead of Christ must not however be considered as involving an essential dissimilarity between the Lord and His disciples : on the contrary, it is the guarantee of the possibility of mutual relation and similarity. This relation between the Godhead of Christ and the raising of the members of the community, and their true destiny over the world, is expressed in the old Greek formula—*αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐννηθρώπησεν ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν*<sup>1</sup>—but the idea was gradually lost sight of in the Latin Church, which pushed to the fore the mediatorial activity of Christ—a conception which served only to widen the gulf between the Divine Christ and human kind.<sup>2</sup>

The Latin mediaeval church accepted the old Catholic formula of the One Person in two Natures, but after a multitude of ingenious but unsuccessful attempts at explanations was constrained by the failure of all such efforts to confess its inability to reach any real knowledge of its object, while mediaeval piety was fain to treat Christ as though the Godhead did not belong to Him at all.<sup>3</sup>

An elaborate discussion of Luther's position shows that he accepted the doctrine of the two Natures but may be claimed as introducing two new elements.

(a) The Godhead of Christ is not exhausted by maintaining the existence of his Divine Nature : in His life and exertions as man, the Godhead was manifest and effective to salvation.

<sup>1</sup> Athanasius, *De Incarn.* liv. *For He was made man that we might be made divine.*

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 366.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 367.

(b) Luther restores the religious valuation of Christ's Person—for it is through trust in our Redeemer that we find our Lord and our God.<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl notices some objections only to brush them impatiently aside. It is objected that such a theory denies the true Godhead of Christ, or concedes it only in name; Christ is after all nothing but a "mere man." Ritschl's argument at this point becomes somewhat sophistical, but he finally draws us back to the distinction between religious and scientific knowledge. It is by the former alone that we can know Christ as our God. "If Christ is my Lord through that which He has done and suffered for my soul, if I honour Him as my God when I trust in His might and love for my salvation, that is a judgment-value of the direct kind. The judgment does not belong to the realm of disinterested scientific knowledge like the Chalcedonian formula. Consequently in so far as my opponents demand a judgment of the latter kind in this connexion, they simply proclaim themselves incapable of distinguishing between religious and scientific knowledge, and not much at home in the true religious sphere. All acts of religious knowledge are direct judgments of value. We can only know the nature of God and the Divine through an appreciation of its value for our own salvation."<sup>2</sup> The same argument is applied later, where Ritschl scornfully retaliates upon his objectors. "If they are really the religious and well-informed persons they profess to be, let them prove it by showing that they know how to distinguish between religious and scientific knowledge."<sup>3</sup> It may also be mentioned at this stage

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 369-375.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 376.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 439.

that Herrmann in the latter part of his pamphlet on "Metaphysik in Theologie" employs almost precisely the same argument which Ritschl has up to this point advanced.<sup>1</sup> He insists over and over again on the religious as distinguished from the metaphysical proof of Christ's Divinity.

But to proceed with Ritschl. It may be naturally asked how this theory harmonizes with the representations of the New Testament. Ritschl accordingly applies himself to the task of dealing with the Biblical evidence as to the Godhead of Christ. He begins by warning us that the supposition that a uniform doctrine of Christ's Godhead can be exegetically constructed from the New Testament is a false assumption. There are two types of presentation—the Pauline, and the Johannine.

(i) Christ is called *Lord*—which among the Jews was equivalent to God—in virtue of His supremacy over the world, into which Christ has entered through His exaltation at the right hand of God.<sup>2</sup> The attribute *Lord*, then, denotes the Lord exalted over the world, and exalted over the Church. (It must not be forgotten that according to Ritschl, the latter is the primary relation.) Whatever goes beyond this practical attribute *Lord* belongs to the sphere of special "knowledge," that is of intellectual knowledge which raises far more problems than it solves.<sup>3</sup> That

<sup>1</sup> Herrmann, *op. cit.* 51-82.

<sup>2</sup> The LXX almost invariably employ *Kύριος* to translate יהוה: and it was thus by the fearless application to Christ of O.T. passages referring to *the Lord* that the Apostles first approached and sought to solve the problem of our Lord's divinity.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* iii. 379.

passages of this nature exist in the Pauline Epistles suggesting the pre-existence of Christ, and His connexion with the work of creation, is not to be denied. Thus St. Paul speaks of "one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through Him."<sup>1</sup> Even more emphatic are the expressions in the Epistle to Colossians. "He is before all things and in Him all things consist: He is the first begotten of all creation, for in Him were all things created."<sup>2</sup> By a violent exegesis Ritschl converted these expressions into references to the exalted Christ. Orthodox fathers, he says, had, in the attempt to "cut up the Arian argument by the roots," referred the passage to the Incarnate Christ—an interpretation which, as Lightfoot shows, disregards history, shatters the context, and could only have arisen in the pressure of theological controversy.<sup>3</sup> How that great scholar would have characterized the Ritschlian interpretation, is manifest; for even Dr. Garvie complains of his "arbitrary and artificial" methods. Ritschl, however, insists that *πρωτότοκος* must be taken metaphorically; that "the temporal priority of Christ before the world cannot be the point at issue—that would be a barren thought."<sup>4</sup> The similar expressions in Ephesians must be taken to refer to the exalted Christ,<sup>5</sup> for *ultimum in executione est primum in intentione*. This will explain the reference to the Son in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "through whom God made the worlds."<sup>6</sup> This expression also must be taken as referring to the exalted Son

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. viii. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Lightfoot, *Ep. Col.* pp. 146-148.

<sup>5</sup> Eph. i. 3-6, 10-30.

<sup>2</sup> Col. i. 15-20.

<sup>4</sup> *R. V.* iii. 380.

<sup>6</sup> Heb. i. 3.

of God who has assumed His pre-destined Lordship over the world.

(ii) We come now to the Johannine form of expression. Here we move in a different circle of thought. The controlling ideas are the conception of the Incarnate Word, and His manifestation to men as the full embodiment of Divine grace and truth. Ritschl describes the significance of the Johannine formula as consisting in the thought that "the Word, which is the general form of divine revelation, has in Him become a human Person."<sup>1</sup> Ritschl ignores the intimations of pre-existence which occur in the writings of St. John no less than in the Epistles of St. Paul.<sup>2</sup> The Johannine type of presentation, he holds, reflects the experience of the community of disciples.

Now in one respect both these forms of representation are similar—they are essentially religious. In other words they aim at describing the significance of Christ for the world-view which He first brought to light, and for the corresponding self-estimate of the individual. The two ideas are in no sense exclusive, but mutually complementary. St. John insists that the influence of Christ is not to be sought solely in the past, but is yet present: yet the idea of the Godhead of the exalted Christ depends entirely upon whether the signs of His Godhead are to be found in His historical existence upon earth.<sup>3</sup>

"If the Godhead of Christ is a Christian postulate, it

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 302.

<sup>2</sup> In the first edition he simply set aside the Lord's saying in John viii. 58, as unintelligible, iii<sup>1</sup>. 357.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* iii. 382, 383.

must be demonstrated to us in His influence upon ourselves. But every form of influence exerted by Christ must find its criterion in the historical form of His life. *Therefore the Godhead or universal lordship of Christ must be apprehended in the definite features of His historical life, as an attribute of His temporal existence.*"<sup>1</sup>

Having thus established his own position Ritschl discusses the various kenotic theories which have been advanced by way of an explanation of the two natures in Christ. His general criticism is that such explanations begin with metaphysical theories of the divine nature rather than with the historical personality. Despite much speculative ingenuity, these theories have failed to combine a true humanity with the divine nature. The only way in which combination is possible, is by divesting the divine nature of the distinctive attributes. It is nothing else than mythology which is taught under the name of the Kenosis of the Divine Logos.<sup>2</sup>

Ritschl finds a strong supporter in Dr. Garvie who states with apparent seriousness that the ecclesiastical dogma of Christ's Divinity seems to sacrifice on the one hand the unity of the Godhead; and on the other the unity of Christ's Person.<sup>3</sup> It might have been considered obvious to any one who had studied the historical origin of the Christological dogma, that these were exactly the two truths which the formula of the two natures in one person was expressly intended to safeguard. Garvie continues, "The kenotic theories are commendable as attempts to do justice to the historical personality of Jesus while assuming the ecclesiastical dogma; but are unsatisfactory in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* iii. 383.    <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 384-393.    <sup>3</sup> Garvie, *Ritschlian Theology*, 271.



putting an undue strain on the passages of the New Testament which are supposed to teach the doctrine, and in venturing on bold assertions about the constitution of deity which go far beyond the legitimate compass of our intelligence in these high matters."

The discussions on this subject in Germany during the Reformation leading to the opposing views of the "Kryptiker" and the "Kenotiker" may furnish illustrations of the kind of language which Dr. Garvie condemns, but on the other hand it is perfectly impossible to deny the mysterious fact of the self-limitation of the Son of God if we would be true to Scriptural teaching. 'Εαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν<sup>1</sup> and ἐπτώχευσεν πλούσιος ὢν<sup>2</sup> express a truth to which reflection could not have failed to lead us, that the humiliation of Christ must be regarded "as being a voluntary act of love; a state maintained by a continuous act of unwearied will."<sup>3</sup> Of course there are difficulties in the conception of a single personality in a double sphere of consciousness: but we cannot demand the solution of all the hidden things of God to suit our intelligence. In the self-humiliation of Christ, we believe that God was really acting and working under human conditions. And to a Scriptural Christian the conclusion that "the Kenosis consisted in a deliberate abstention on the part of the Logos from Divine powers that might at any moment have been resumed,"<sup>4</sup> will seem a more reasonable deduction from the facts as they are revealed to us than Ritschl's sweeping assertions and denials.

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 7; *He emptied Himself.*

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. viii. 9; *Being rich, He became poor.*

<sup>3</sup> Ottley, *Doctrine of Incarnation*, 609.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 612.

If then we are not allowed to approach the Christological problem from the point of view of Christ's nature, how shall we proceed? By a consideration of His work, His vocation. "The theological solution of the problem of the Divinity of Christ must be based on an analysis of the activity of Christ for the salvation of mankind in the form of His community."<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl avails himself of the old ecclesiastical formula of the three offices of Christ. As anointed with the Divine Spirit, He is not merely king, but priest and prophet also.<sup>2</sup> The historical connexion of Christianity with the religion of the Old Testament explains the fact that Jesus comes before us as a divinely sent prophet, who knows the counsel of God concerning the world, and all men therein. As prophet He speaks what He has heard from God and what He has seen.<sup>3</sup>

As priest, Christ maintains His own nearness to God, and brings His people near. Ritschl discusses this subject under a separate heading;<sup>4</sup> and his interesting and original conception is of importance in understanding the doctrine of forgiveness.

But He is above all the priests and prophets of the Old Covenant, for as the Son of God and promised King of David's seed, He comes not to prepare but to possess the Kingdom of God. This kingly office is His highest function, corresponding to the great central conception of the Kingdom of God.

Such then is Christ's vocation; what may be learnt from it as to His person? First, Ritschl

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 393.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 394.

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht*, 16; cf. John vi. 46; viii. 26, 38, 40.

<sup>4</sup> *Die priesterliche Leistung Christi für sich*, *R. V.* iii. 444-456.

would have us realize the possibility of seeing real personal development in the fulfilment of Christ's task : and secondly, in His work for others we must yield to Him a unique position. For, even should another hereafter rise to His height, it would be through His example and work alone. "As He, as the founder of the Kingdom of God, and as the bearer of the moral dominion of God over mankind, is the only one in comparison with others who have received from Him the same final determination, so He is that magnitude in the world in whose self-end God makes His own self-end in an original manner operative and manifest ; whose whole activity in His vocation, accordingly, forms the matter of the complete revelation of God present in Him, or in whom the word of God is human person." <sup>1</sup>

This cumbrous sentence is a measure of the difficulties encountered by an interpreter of Ritschl. Its meaning however is clear. Christ realizes God's purpose, and reveals God's nature. What, then, are we to think of Christ? That to us He has the value of God. But what more? Is He, then, God? Ritschl puts the question aside, for no answer can be given. "How the Person of Christ became that which it is for the moral and religious consciousness, is no proper subject for theological investigation, for the problem stretches out far beyond the limits of any possible investigation of whatever kind." <sup>2</sup> To a meaningless question we can only return a meaningless answer. Where the problem is insoluble, solutions are without value. Christ exists for faith, and not for reason.

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 426.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 426.

In the *Unterricht* Ritschl deals with the whole question in a less diffuse and more easily intelligible manner.<sup>1</sup> In the moral world, he declares, the authority of every personality depends on the correspondence to be noticed between the vocation and its fulfilment. Applying this test to Christ, we notice :

(i) The fidelity of Christ in the fulfilment of His mission. His was the highest possible vocation—to found the Kingdom of God: and to it He consistently applied Himself in the highest possible way. Despite the enmity of the Jewish hierarchy, despite the misunderstandings of the populace, and manifold temptations, He displayed a marvellous consistency and steadfastness in the execution of His purpose through words of truth and acts of love, and through patience and submission.

(ii) The task of Christ, the final purpose of His life, was also that which He recognized as the final purpose of God Himself. He thus exhibits “a solidaric unity with God.” In this complete identification of His own will with that of God in the bringing of the Kingdom, Jesus is unique, for, starting from His own consciousness and with no example to imitate, He is the type of humanity bound to God in His Kingdom. As such He is the original object of God’s love; and it is through His mediation that the love of God rests upon the members of the Kingdom.

(iii) Corresponding to the solidaric unity of Jesus with the supra-mundane God in the realization of the supra-mundane kingdom we find Christ’s

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.* 16-20.

supremacy over the whole world. This attribute of kingship, as Ritschl rightly insists, is not to be seen solely *in statu exaltationis*.<sup>1</sup> It was in patience and suffering, in the voluntary submission to the death of the Cross as the means of ultimate victory, that Christ's kingship was most truly shown. Not by virtue of His miraculous powers, but in absolute independence of the world's standards, in entire disregard of its pains and pleasures did Christ exercise perpetual sovereignty. It is this freedom, this kingship that He bequeathed to all believers; it is this kingship which He Himself the Head of the Kingdom first manifested in His own Person.<sup>2</sup>

These are the three grounds upon which we may predicate the Divinity of Christ. They may be reduced to two—the complete revelation of God's grace and truth, through Christ; and the perfect supremacy over the world.<sup>3</sup> The signs of Christ's Godhead may also be expanded as follows:

(i) He is the revelation of grace and truth—the specially divine attributes of Him concerning whom we have learned to say that God is love.

(ii) He manifests an entire independence of His own religious self-consciousness in opposition to the world.

(iii) He proved the truth of His claim by His actual success in founding the supra-mundane Kingdom of God.

(iv) He alone is able to reproduce His own attributes in the members of His community,

<sup>1</sup> *R.V.* iii. 407.

<sup>2</sup> In addition to the passage in *Unterricht* already cited, cf. *R.V.* 423-438, esp. 430 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht*, 19.

(v) but never loses, nor can lose His original uniqueness.

That this is an adequate explanation of the doctrine of Christ's Godhead can hardly be maintained, though of course it would not be denied that through these things the Godhead is manifested to men. Ritschl maintains that the union of will is something far more real and more important than any union of nature. It is through the will that the nature is known. But the vital defect of the Ritschlian theology is that we never go back from the will to the nature—from the manifestation of Godhead to the mystery of the Incarnation which underlies, explains, and combines all the outward manifestations.

This seems the most suitable point to consider the Ritschlian attitude to the fact of Christ's Resurrection and to those attributes of miraculous power, and of sinlessness, which are generally urged in favour of a belief in Christ's Divinity.

Ritschl admits the sinlessness of our Lord; but, as he denies original sin and regards actual sin only as "an apparently unavoidable product of the human will under the given conditions of its development"<sup>1</sup> the admission does not commit us to anything more than that Jesus was an exceptional man, who reached a standard not hitherto attained, yet humanly attainable.

As to the Resurrection, Professor Swing, in his entirely appreciative and indiscriminating eulogy of the *Theology of Albrecht Ritschl*, maintains that it is really the pivot of the whole system. This is a

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 26.

ludicrous exaggeration. Ritschl, it is true, speaks continually of the exalted Christ; but never once in the course of the thousand and more pages of his great work does he make an unambiguous reference to the Resurrection: and in the index the subject is entirely ignored. In the *Unterricht* he alludes in quite a casual manner to "the reawakening of Christ through the power of God,"<sup>1</sup> as the natural ending of such a life as His, the only ending corresponding to the value of His Person. But it must be dubious how far this must be understood as equivalent to the orthodox belief that on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures. Many other passages seem to show that the idea of the resurrection must be taken as equivalent to that of the exaltation to the right hand of God, an expression which denotes the confidence of the community that her Lord's influence is still a present power in her midst, and that the purpose of His life was not frustrated but fulfilled in death.<sup>2</sup>

With regard to miracles, Ritschl speaks as if Christ was conscious of, and actually possessed, a miraculous power;<sup>3</sup> but miracles he elsewhere tells us are to be considered from a religious, not from a scientific point of view. They must on no account be regarded as contraventions of the established order of nature. Miracle does not create, but presupposes faith. Every man in the religious life experiences miracles, and it is wholly gratuitous to cast doubt upon the miracles experienced by others.<sup>4</sup> We have thus reached a definition of miracle which,

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 18.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 20.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* iii. 430.

<sup>4</sup> *Unterricht*, 12, 13.



from its excessive vagueness, precludes attributing to Christ the exercise of any truly supernatural powers.

The attitude of Ritschl in this respect is practically that of the entire Ritschlian school. Thus Harnack says of the miraculous element in the Gospels: "The question of miracles is of relative indifference in comparison with everything else which is found in the Gospels. It is not miracles that matter."<sup>1</sup> In another work he lays down the position that "the historian cannot regard a miracle as a sure historical event; every individual miracle remains historically quite doubtful, and a summation of things doubtful can never lead to certainty."<sup>2</sup> Thus also Herrmann: "The discussion for or against the trustworthiness of the narratives of miracles is a matter of perfect indifference for the theology of the present day,"<sup>3</sup> and in his later book he insists upon the impossibility of making religion depend upon a historical judgment.<sup>4</sup> The immediate impression wrought by Christ upon our souls is wholly independent of the results of modern criticism of the Gospel narrative. It is impossible not to feel much sympathy with this attitude. Herrmann appeals to the teaching of Luther in support of his position. "If the miracles of Christ had never taken place, or if we knew nothing of them, we should still have sufficient hold on the Word, without which we could have no life."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* 31.

<sup>2</sup> *History of Dogma*, i. 65.

<sup>3</sup> Herrmann, *Die Religion*, etc. 383.

<sup>4</sup> *Communion with God*, (6th edition), 56.

<sup>5</sup> Herrmann, *op. cit.* 184.

It is almost an obvious truism when Harnack, after stating "it is not miracles that matter," proceeds to explain that "the question on which everything turns is whether we are helplessly yoked to an inexorable necessity, or whether a God exists who rules and governs, and whose power to compel Nature we can move by prayer and make part of our own experience."<sup>1</sup> That is true; but it is the miracles of the Lord Jesus that gives us the assurance of our freedom, and tell us of a power of love above the mechanical forces of natural causation. Moreover, the miracles of the Lord were not so wholly for unbelievers as Herrmann would lead us to suppose by his citations from Luther.<sup>2</sup> It was St. John, whose spiritual instincts had been quickened by long years of Christian reflection and experience, that saw most clearly in those wondrous works the "signs" by which Christ manifested forth His glory.

Coming to the Resurrection, we find great diversity among the Ritschlian theologians, but a fundamental unanimity also—for all are agreed that in some sense the Lord is alive for evermore. Harnack for instance declares that "every conception which represents the resurrection of Christ as a simple resurrection of His mortal body is far from the original conception." Indeed he goes so far as to say that "history does not give the slightest cause for the assumption that Jesus did not remain in the grave."<sup>3</sup> Similarly in his popular lectures on the essence of Christianity he explains that "if the resurrection meant nothing but that a deceased body of flesh and blood came to life

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* 31.      <sup>2</sup> Herrmann, *op. cit.* 185.

<sup>3</sup> Harnack, *Dogmen-geschichte*, i. 87.

again, we should make short work of this tradition. . . . The New Testament itself distinguishes between the Easter message (of the empty grave) and the Easter faith (the conviction that the Crucified yet lives). . . . Either we must decide to rest our belief on a foundation unstable and always exposed to fresh doubts, or else we must abandon this foundation altogether, and with it the miraculous appeal to our senses."<sup>1</sup>

Herrmann in his earlier works seems disposed to accept the literal resurrection<sup>2</sup> but in his more famous book on the "Communion of the Christian with God" makes it quite clear that he attaches no real importance to the resurrection in this sense. In Christianity nothing else is necessary than to proclaim Christ. In no sense is it helpful to such a proclamation to insist, supported by New Testament references and doctrines, on narrating that Jesus was born as Son of God, of a pure Virgin, that He taught this or that, wrought many miracles, even raised the dead, nay that He Himself rose again, and, since His ascension to the Father, rules with almighty power. These and similar stories do not constitute the Gospel. Indeed at the present day so far from helping, they positively hinder faith.<sup>3</sup> Wendt believes that the predictions of Christ "directly conveyed only the thought that Jesus would after the briefest interval be awakened from death to the heavenly life with God."<sup>4</sup> Kaftan however takes a much more positive view. He cannot understand how any Christian theologian should accept the impossibility of miracles

<sup>1</sup> *What is Christianity?* 163-165.

<sup>2</sup> Herrmann, *Die Religion, etc.* 386.

<sup>3</sup> Herrmann, *op. cit.* 63.

<sup>4</sup> Wendt, *Die Lehre Jesu*, ii. 243.

as a fundamental axiom.<sup>1</sup> He speaks with emphasis of the central place that the Resurrection takes in the scheme of Christian revelation.<sup>2</sup> The task of the Apostles was to be witnesses of the Resurrection. The latter is the determining factor of Christian revelation. From a human stand-point the revelation without the appearance of the Risen Christ would have been without result. Knowledge of Jesus means knowledge of Him Who is risen. The Resurrection is an essential element of the Apostolic preaching, without which we should never have received the Gospel.<sup>3</sup> Häring and Kähler also unequivocally admit the fact of Christ's literal rising again.

To resume, we may state that the Ritschlian School do not seek in the virgin-birth, in the sinlessness, in the miraculous power, in the resurrection of Jesus any substantial evidence for the Godhead of our Lord. We may sum up the teaching of Ritschl on the subject, by predicating Divinity of our Lord, inasmuch as He was the perfect revealer of the Father's grace and truth, and also manifested inward supremacy over the world. The objection—brought against Ritschl impartially by theologians of all schools—that the attribute of Godhead is placed only in the will and not in the nature of Christ, is met by the assertion that the difference is epistemological, not theological. In every sphere, he argues, the nature is known from the will. So also it is in the good and world-ruling will of Christ that we must recognize His nature. It is hopeless to regard

Kaftan, *Die Wahrheit*, 561.

<sup>2</sup> *Das Wesen*, 333, 334.

<sup>3</sup> *Das Wesen*, 348; cf. 250 ff.

it as a kind of mechanical consequence of natural combinations.<sup>1</sup> Are we then justified in saying that Christ is God by nature? Ritschl unreasonably bars the way. The question how the Person of Christ is to be derived from God or comes to possess its moral or religious value, lies entirely outside the scope of theological investigation.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore Christ under the attribute of pre-existence is not revealed but hidden. The expression "before Abraham was, I am," must not be supposed to have any reference to the Divinity of Christ. It was spoken to close a discussion, not to state a doctrine.<sup>3</sup> The Eternal Godhead of the Son of God is perfectly intelligible only for God Himself. But only for God, "*since for us as pre-existent Christ is hidden.*"<sup>4</sup>

As at the right hand of God exalted, Christ rules in present power over the community of the Divine Kingdom: but any immediate relation of prayer which may be supposed to exist between Him and individual believers is excluded, for *as exalted He is hidden from our sight.*<sup>5</sup> The formula of the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God either is for us without content because Christ "*as exalted is directly hidden from us* or is the occasion of all possible mystical fanaticism, unless one refers it to the power of His historical acts and words as the enduring influence in His community."<sup>6</sup> Towards the close of the third volume Ritschl recurs to this subject, and draws an important distinction. He carefully abstains

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 440.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 426.

<sup>3</sup> *R. V.* (first edition), 357. The remark is suppressed in later editions.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 443, 444.

<sup>5</sup> *R. V.* iii<sup>1</sup>. 381.

<sup>6</sup> 407; cf. 384.

from speaking of any real presence of Christ in the community, or in the believer's heart. He speaks of Christ conceived as present, but not as really present.<sup>1</sup>

We cannot, says a most sympathetic reviewer, repress the judgment that Ritschl has allowed himself to be misled by his views as to theoretic knowledge, into impoverishing the original Christian relation to Christ, the exalted and present Lord.<sup>2</sup>

It becomes clearer now what Ritschl means by a return to the historical Christ: for both as exalted and as pre-existent, Christ is hidden from us. His Godhead must only be sought in the definite traits of His historical life—His temporal existence.<sup>3</sup>

Ritschl rejects entirely Kaftan's key-text—*the life hid with Christ in God*. The glorified state in which Christ is assumed to dwell means nothing to us; and unless we are prepared to fall into the extravagances of mysticism, the exaltation must be interpreted as "the perpetuation of Christ's image and influence in the Scriptures and in the Church."<sup>4</sup> We may close this section by citing the words with which Ritschl himself closes that part of his instruction which is concerned with the doctrine of Christ: "The continuance of the Christian community is grounded in the fact that the memory of the completed life-work of Christ remains present in her, and that corresponding to this conception the personal impulse of her Founder works on unceasingly in all the like strivings of her members. These ideas form the open side of the mystery of the exaltation to the right hand of God."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 562.

<sup>2</sup> Ecke, 62.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 62.

<sup>4</sup> *R. V.* iii. 383; cf. *Unterricht*, 19.

<sup>5</sup> *Unterricht*, 20

It need hardly be said that the Ritschlian Christology evoked a storm of opposition, and also revealed grave differences of opinion between individual members of the school. The objections, however, were not directed against his methodical or historical treatment of the Christological problem, nor merely against his denial of personal pre-existence to the Son of God. It was the denial of immediate personal access to Christ, the exalted Lord, and the restriction of the predicate of Godhead to the earthly historical life and work of Christ that roused the most energetic protest. For religious interest is not exhausted in the conception of the Lord of the Community ; it also centres round the Saviour of individual believers—the Good Shepherd who knows our needs and hears our prayers.<sup>1</sup>

Ritschl condemns this type of piety as mystical, but thereby shows himself incapable of distinguishing a healthy type of sound biblical piety from later conceptions and accretions. Kaftan refuses to be frightened by a name, and boldly declares that there is a mystical side to Christianity, and that a distinction must be made between those mystical elements which are common to all true religions and that mysticism which represents a false unchristian form of piety.<sup>2</sup>

The real quarrel with Ritschl is not concerned with pre-existence, but with the possibility of immediate access to a personal Saviour. On Ritschl's side we have Herrmann, Harnack, and Schultz ; on the other, Häring, Kähler, Bornemann, Kaftan, Ecke. A few illustrations may be given.

<sup>1</sup> Ecke, 64.

<sup>2</sup> Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, 262, 263.



Thus Schultz, following Ritschl's lead, urges the uniqueness of the revelation brought by Christ, but yet insists on His essential similarity to many brethren; in other words, that Christ was purely a created being even as others. "The belief in the Godhead of Christ has to prove, in accordance with the Scripture intimations, that the motives and purposes which are revealed by the personality of Christ in the work of Christ are recognized as the proper and complete motives and purposes of God Himself, and that as such they bear in themselves a world-controlling power and wisdom." This we discover to be the case in Christ. But "such a human life, realizing divine, not worldly ideals, is not to be explained from worldly conditions. It is a secret, a mystery; not in any sense as if on account of this secret, this mystery, the Person of Christ should straightway be separated from the other children of God; for in the last resort every personality and its development in relation to the kingdom lies hid in the secret of the eternal counsel of God and the power of His Spirit."<sup>1</sup>

Herrmann was, at an earlier stage, disposed to accept the idea of pre-existence. "I certainly have the conviction that faith in Christ was led by a natural process to the representation of a pre-existence of Christ, and indeed of a personal, not an ideal, pre-existence."<sup>2</sup> But "the communion of the Christian with God" strikes a different note. This remarkable work really deserves a more thorough

<sup>1</sup> Schultz, *Die Lehre von der Gottheit Christi*, 467.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Religion*, etc., 449.

examination than we can give.<sup>1</sup> The theory which the writer seeks to establish, is that our communion with God is only made possible through the immediate impression the soul receives, when confronted with the image of the historical Christ. The writer denies any direct working of God either on or in the soul. The Gospels present us with a picture to which the soul must yield, and yielding knows that God Himself has drawn near. Communion then is the result of the historical manifestation. What else does this teach us of Christ? It tells us of His Godhead and His exaltation. Herrmann would have his readers accept the Divinity of our Lord, though not in the usual ecclesiastical sense. In that which Jesus does for us we grasp the purpose of God directed to our salvation, or God Himself as personal spirit working upon us. This is the form in which a man reconciled with God through Christ must necessarily acknowledge the Godhead of Christ, even if he repudiates the expression.<sup>2</sup> The Divinity of Christ must in no sense be represented as a partaking of a Divine substance—a mode of thought neither monotheistic nor religious, but as the revelation of the Divine will to which all is subject, and the Divine power that constrains and frees our souls. "The Godhead of Jesus can only be understood in the sense that the mind and will of the eternal God meets us in the historically active will of this man."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From an English standpoint the book is made somewhat tedious owing to the elaborate attempt to show that the author's positions are in harmony with the teaching of Luther.

<sup>2</sup> *Verkehr*, 116; cf. also 133.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 141.

With reference to the exalted Christ, Herrmann is eloquent with almost mystical fervour. "Now Jesus lives and is perfected, freed from earthly limitations. Now He is most perfectly that which He would be. . . . We must be convinced that the exalted Lord knows how near or how far we stand in relation to Himself."<sup>1</sup> In moments when we are tempted to despair of a successful issue in our ceaseless struggle we are cheered by the thought that the Lord who has conquered is still at our side with all His human sympathies.<sup>2</sup> These things, however, are "thoughts of faith," most useful and even necessary; but it does not follow that they actually correspond to fact. That is of minor importance compared with their practical value, which is to lead us to hold communion with God, through whom we receive power to overcome the world. The means thereto is to hold fast the image of the historic Christ, and to live in the confidence that the Exalted One is by our side.<sup>3</sup> But if that is really so, why not hold communion with Him? This Herrmann forbids absolutely. *Of a communion with the Exalted Christ there can be no mention.*<sup>4</sup> Through the historic life of Jesus, God is made manifest, but the Exalted Christ is hidden from our eyes. That He helps our infirmities with might and sympathy is simply a thought of faith. There is no fact by which it can be substantiated. The resurrection is based on doubtful historical testimony; the work of the Spirit in the world may be called in question. The Christian must admit that the Exalted

<sup>1</sup> *Verkehr*, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 233.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 234.

Christ is yet hidden from him ;<sup>1</sup> he can only have communion with Christ in faith, not in experience.<sup>2</sup>

Herrmann gives us the most fully reasoned development of Ritschl's views in this respect, but despite its six editions it is difficult to take this work quite seriously. There is no adequate appreciation of the distinction that should be drawn between a fact of faith and a fact for faith. Moreover, it is self-contradictory to base all upon a historical revelation, and then profess entire indifference towards historical criticism. We may also ask how it is possible to speak of an immediate impression of the historical Christ when such a faith is really mediated to us through the witness of the Gospels, the teaching of the Church, early associations, and spiritual environment. Finally as judged by a scriptural standard, Herrmann's theory must be pronounced wholly inadequate, for *Jesus and the Resurrection* was the substance of the Apostolic preaching, and the life of the earliest believers was *hid with Christ in God*.

Kaftan recognizing these facts—and they are nothing less—takes far firmer ground. He admits that Christian faith has always ascribed to the historical person of its Lord a supernatural dignity which found expression in the Divine worship paid to Him since the earliest times. He recognizes also that the Divinity of our Lord is the cardinal problem for any Christian theology. Kaftan quite deliberately refuses to discuss the Christological dogma of the old Catholic church, and sets out to seek an interpretation

<sup>1</sup> *Verkehr*, 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 236.

of Christ's Godhead which will "correspond with the Christian religion."

It is along two lines that Kaftan would establish the doctrine of the Lord's Divinity.

(i) The exalted Christ is the highest good of Christian belief.

(ii) The historical Jesus is the perfect revealer of the Almighty Father. "Who knows Him, knows God. He is God manifest in the flesh, that is, among men. As the exalted and revealed Christ is the highest good of humanity, so was Jesus dwelling on the earth the perfect revelation of God in the world."<sup>1</sup>

The evangelical picture of the life of Christ corresponds entirely to this conception of His Godhead.

We see in Him the incarnation of the holy love of God. "He is the man in whom God caused the fulness of His eternal being to dwell, so that for us He is the image of the invisible God."<sup>2</sup>

A certain ambiguity clings about these expressions—but in the light of Kaftan's later utterances, we are justified in taking them in their most favourable sense. "We cannot call a man God—the word is too great and weighty—unless we truly mean that the Eternal God has come to us in Him. . . . If we believe in the Godhead of the Lord, then we believe also in His origin from above, from God."<sup>3</sup>

Ecke, whose book upon the theological school of Albert Ritschl must be regarded as the classical exposition of Ritschlianism, writing from an extremely sympathetic but judiciously independent

<sup>1</sup> Kaftan, *Das Wesen*, 335.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 339.

<sup>3</sup> *Brauchen wir ein neues Dogma?* 58.

standpoint, indicates the real defect of the Ritschlian theology in this vital point of the Lord's Divinity. "The question is never raised," he says, "if our strong emphasizing of the power of the historical work of Christ does not constrain us to assume a supra-historical background." He complains, with justice, "that the witness of the earliest community to the influence of the exalted Lord, supported by many writers, and manifested by many signs following, is too often ignored in discussions of this question."<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Garvie, whom no one will accuse of undue prejudice against Ritschl, repeats what is practically the same criticism. "The Christ of faith," he insists, must be conceived "as actor as well as spectator in Christian history—a truth Ritschl fails to state with the clearness which would save him from being misunderstood."<sup>2</sup> But it is not merely a truth which Ritschl fails to state: it is a truth he fails to see. For him the exalted Christ, to use his own words, is hidden. Yet the Acts of the Apostles should have made it manifest how very different a view prevailed in the earliest community of believers.

Ritschl, and Herrmann after him, seek to establish the Godhead of Christ as a judgment of value—a thought of faith, while denying, or at any rate refusing to affirm, His essential dignity. But it is impossible to be content with equivocation. *What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?* An answer is imperatively demanded. Ritschlianism leaves the sudden appearance of a man supernaturally endowed

<sup>1</sup> Ecke, *op. cit.* 70.

<sup>2</sup> Garvie, 277.

to be the bearer of a perfect revelation, an inexplicable and isolated phenomenon in human history. But this is utterly unscientific. The fact of Christ must be co-ordinated with other facts, as the Christian revelation cannot adopt a self-enclosed attitude, nor refuse to take cognizance of external knowledge.

It is in the interests of religion that Ritschlianism presents us with a non-metaphysical, or, to use a plainer term, a humanitarian view of Christ. But it is just the religious interests which feel the most outraged by the Ritschlian conception. We may admit the real service done to theology by the fresh insistence on the historical aspect of the Lord's Person, on the completeness of His revelation, on the fact that He is alive for evermore ; but religion must have facts on which to found its faith. To insist upon a historical view of Christ which is constructed in defiance of historical principles seem little less than an absurdity. But that is the position of Ritschlianism ; for while informing us that its sole revelation principle is the historic Christ, this theology nevertheless feels itself at liberty to discard anything in the sacred narrative which it chooses to consider as of secondary importance. Faith founded on history cannot claim to be impregnable to historical criticism.

But purely from a religious point of view it cannot be said that Ritschlianism offers any advantages over the traditional Catholic belief. For a Christ with whom we cannot hold communion, a Christ whose presence by our side it is not ours to feel but to fancy, a Christ to whom we may not pray, is not the Christ of Christian experience any



more than He is the Christ of the evangelical record and apostolic preaching.

In spite of Dr. Garvie's protests and strained defence, we cannot but think that Dr. Denney is justified when he says: "We must as rational beings try to clear up to our minds what is necessarily involved in the existence among men of a person who has the religious value of God. Theologians who refuse to go beyond this are invariably found to cover, under the guise of a religious indifference to metaphysics, a positive disbelief of everything which gives Christ's Godhead an objective character. They do not admit the supernatural birth; they do not admit the pre-existence taught by St. Paul; they do not admit the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Logos, at least as taught by St. John."<sup>1</sup>

*What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?* We have the Ritschlian answer before us, but it lacks both the simplicity and the depth of the scriptural witness and the Church's creed. Not so have we learned Christ, and not so did the Apostles bring the world to the foot of the Cross.

<sup>1</sup> Denney, *Studies in Theology*, 14.

## CHAPTER XI

### SIN AND SALVATION

IT is impossible to have a right conception of Christ's redeeming work without a right conception of sin, and "it is impossible to have an adequate conception of sin without an adequate conception of God. The Hebrews in general, and St. Paul in particular, had this ; and that is why sin is such an intense reality to them. It is not a mere defect, the coming short of an ideal, the mark of an imperfect development. It is something more than a negation: it is a positive quality, calling forth a positive reaction. It is a personal offence against a personal God. It is an injury or wound—if the re-action which it involves may be described in such human terms as injury or wound—directed against the Holy One, whose love is incessantly going forth towards man. It causes an estrangement, a deep gulf of separation, between God and man."<sup>1</sup>

Such is the Scriptural doctrine concerning sin. It is not a mere falling short of a human ideal, but involves disobedience to the will of God. This view necessitates a corresponding conception of God as essentially righteous and holy. In virtue of His

<sup>1</sup> Sanday and Headlam, *Romans* (3rd edition), 144.

essential righteousness, there is a wrath of God against sin. Sin, just because it is directed against an all-holy God, must be visited with punishment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."<sup>1</sup> It is of course needless to press the statement of the third chapter of Genesis as to details: it is sufficient to point out that, in the simplest form, the early prophet who first incorporated those popular traditions into the national history, has given us an account of the nature and character of sin, which have never been surpassed. The knowledge of the Divine will, the deliberate transgression of the Divine command, the consciousness of guilt, the separation from God, the Divine punishment on sin, and the perpetuation and transmission of this hateful tendency are the essential truths of the narrative beyond which centuries of experience and reflection have not enabled us to make much advance. *How* man came to know the Divine will is another matter: the point is, that man possessed of such knowledge, yet found himself free to act in deliberate defiance of right and wrong, and that to all men there is a tendency towards evil, self-condemned no less than condemned of God.

How then were sinners to be reconciled to God? "God was in Christ, reconciling sinners to Himself." But it was only through the Cross that reconciliation was in any wise made possible. Nothing, indeed, is more impressive than the entire unanimity of the Apostolic writers in this respect. However varied their exegetical methods, or their Christological conceptions, in this they are all agreed, that the death of Christ had a sacrificial value, that by the shedding

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xviii. 4.

of His blood He vanquished sin and restored man's true relation to God by a perfect atonement: that His death is our only plea, and that through His blood we receive forgiveness of all our sins. Nor ought we to ignore the fact that the Apostolic language was suggested by our Lord Himself, who spoke of the giving of His life as *a ransom for many*,<sup>1</sup> and expressly connected the shedding of His blood with the idea of sacrifice by which the old Covenant had been inaugurated, and through which the new Covenant would be fulfilled (Mt. xxvi. 28).

But there is a human side also. Man must repent, and must believe. There must be a change of mind, a determination to turn from sin to God, and also faith in Christ, through whom redemption is wrought, an enthusiastic acceptance of the Redeemer's claims, and adhesion to His Person. Such faith on the human side is met on the Divine side by *justification*. The believer, in reality *ungodly*, is accounted *righteous*.<sup>2</sup> God looks at the man's change of heart, rather than on his past record; and he accepts him as just and righteous. In other words, justification is the free and full forgiveness of sins. It is not the making righteous, but the accounting righteous—such is the inexorable verdict of philological and grammatical considerations—or, in other words, the remission of sins at the outset of a man's Christian career. In the sacrament of baptism that promise is sealed and ratified: indeed, as in the early Church a non-baptized Christian could not even have been imagined, no great care was exercised in discriminating between the effects of justification and baptism. It may perhaps

<sup>1</sup> Mk. x. 45: Mt. xx. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Rom. iv. 5.

be said, that while justification looked towards the past, regeneration pointed to the future. Justification was the doing away of the old conversation, regeneration was the birth into new life. Baptism, by its expressive symbolism, sealed the promise of forgiveness of the past; yet typified not only the death of the old man, but also the resurrection to newness of life in the power of God.

As baptism was always accompanied by the solemn profession of faith, as it marked the believer's entrance into the Christian community, as it typified and fulfilled all the conditions of the new birth, it was so closely connected with regeneration as to be practically indistinguishable from it, though of course the actual baptism always remained the outward side of an act whose inward significance was summarized in the word regeneration, "a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness."

After baptism, the believer found himself welcomed as a new member of God's family in Christ. He then became aware that the electing love of God had adopted him into the full privileges of sonship: he became the son of God by adoption and grace.

By grace: for it plainly was not earned by man's merits. "Not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy God saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."<sup>1</sup>

Justification then is but the first step in the

<sup>1</sup> Titus iii. 5-7.

Christian life : it is God's answer to our act of faith in Christ : it is sealed in baptism when we are received into the congregation of Christ's Church, and, cleansed from sin, receive new birth from God. Within the Christian community, we are called to live answerably to our Christian calling, wherein we are assisted by the Holy Spirit, who helpeth our infirmities. Justification issues in the life of sanctification, and living thus, we may, with God's help and for Christ's sake, hope to attain to full and complete salvation. Thus, in one sense, those that are justified are also those that are being sanctified : and those that are being sanctified are those that are being saved. It is important that justification, sanctification, and salvation should all be distinguished in thought ; but it is only a false isolation, an unreal abstraction, that would view them in entire independence. They are all most intimately connected : yet to confuse them either in time or in thought leads to disaster, as the history of the doctrine abundantly proves. The scriptural doctrine is this : "by our life we shall be judged . . . but we are saved by Christ's death ; and the initial act of faith has been the hand which we stretched out to receive the Divine mercy." <sup>1</sup>

Having sketched the orthodox doctrine of sin and salvation, which, whatever its defects, may certainly claim the merits of clearness and coherence, we turn to see what Ritschlianism has to offer us in its place. That the Ritschlian theory necessitated profound modifications of the ordinary view is manifested from the fact that Ritschl starts with a wholly inadequate conception of the *righteousness* of God. The formula

<sup>1</sup> S. H., *Romans*, p. 153.

*God is love* is supposed to prove that God can only be known in the form of will, and this in its turn is supposed to exclude all those attributes of power and holiness with which Scripture clothes its conception of Godhead. "Since it follows as a settled result of the assumption of the personality of God, that He is real only in the form of will, it is bad metaphysics to ascribe to Him righteousness as a quiescent attribute, which belongs to Him apart from the form of will."<sup>1</sup> We note in passing the strange appeal to metaphysics to demonstrate a view to be untenable in a sphere from which *ex hypothesi* metaphysics are excluded.

What interpretation then does Ritschl give of the Biblical phraseology which finds in the idea of the Divine holiness the fitting expression of the very essence of Deity? The holiness of God in Himself is but another way of expressing the righteousness of God in active operation. This fundamental determination of the Divine character expressed in the phrase, *the righteousness of God*, is of course capable of various interpretations; for the idea itself is differently understood by the different writers of the Old Testament and New. At one time it refers to God's truth in the fulfilment of His promises to His people, at another to the destruction of those who set themselves in perpetual opposition to the chosen people. Ritschl seizes on such passages, and claims that they justify the identification of the Divine righteousness with grace and truth.<sup>2</sup> In this connection he refers to Rom. iii. 25-26, but the language of that passage carries us far beyond any

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 237.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 12.



Ritschlian interpretation of righteousness. "Whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood for a display of His righteousness: because of the passing over of sins that are past in the forbearance of God, with a view to the display of His righteousness at the present time, so that He might be at once righteous (just) and declaring righteous (justifying) him which believeth in Jesus." Without entering upon a full discussion of this passage (which is of paramount importance for the understanding of the apostle's thought concerning the Divine righteousness) we may at any rate insist that no interpretation does justice to the language if it fails to lay stress on the following points:

- (i) The death of Christ was with a view to the demonstration of the righteousness of God.
- (ii) The way in which the death of Christ demonstrated the righteousness of God was that it proved the impossibility of passing over sin.
- (iii) The death of Christ was of the nature of sacrifice by which the Divine righteousness was set free, as it were, to embrace all believers.

It is impossible on any sound exegesis to eliminate the idea of justice from righteousness, or to treat the latter solely as if it were equivalent to God's faithfulness in carrying out His purposes of love.

But Scripture speaks also of the wrath of God. The natural interpretation of this expression is to regard it as denoting the Divine righteousness in collision with sin. In the Old Testament the Divine wrath breaks forth upon Israel for violation of the Covenant,

and upon the enemies of Israel for their cruel treatment of the chosen people. In the prophets the idea becomes more prominent, and is associated with the doctrine of the Day of Jehovah—*dies irae, dies illa*—when the Lord will gather out of His Kingdom all that offends, and will utterly destroy with the breath of His fierce anger those that oppose themselves to Messiah's rule. Ritschl is therefore correct in regarding the expression as predominantly eschatological. It must also be admitted that where the phrase recurs in the New Testament, there, also, it is mainly used in an eschatological sense, though with some notable exceptions;<sup>1</sup> but this admission cannot justify the deduction that the doctrine of "the wrath of God has no religious value for Christians."<sup>2</sup> Ritschl does, however, admit (at the sacrifice of consistency) the possibility of the wrath of God being manifested in the annihilation of the obdurate and impenitent. But this is no more than an entirely hypothetical contingency. "Whether there are such persons, and who they are, lies within the scope neither of our practical judgment nor of our theoretical knowledge."<sup>3</sup>

We next feel inclined to ask what is the meaning of those Biblical representations as to a Divine judgment which are as common in the New Testament

<sup>1</sup> For the eschatological use cf. Mt. iii. 7; 1 Thess. i. 10; Rev. vi. 16, 17—for the other senses, cf. Rom. i. 18; 1 Thess. ii. 16 (in both of which cases the reference is rather to an actual condition than to a future judgment) and Rom. xii. 19, where ἡ ὀργή is plainly the Divine wrath.

<sup>2</sup> R. V. ii. 154.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 363; Ritschl's discussion of the significance of *the wrath of God* is contained in his second volume, cf. ii. 140-142; 154, etc.

as in the Old. The Ritschlian exegesis is not unequal to the strain. The idea of a government of the world by punishment and reward is repeatedly and emphatically repudiated. It is a case of false analogy, the Divine kingdom being regarded rather as the dispensing of justice on the lines of an earthly government, than as the discipline of a family.

Ritschl points out three main differences between the Biblical idea of government by punishment and reward, and the popular conceptions of Divine rule :

- (i) There is absolutely no question as of any rights between man and God.
- (ii) There is no real equivalence between reward and worth, punishment and unworthiness.
- (iii) No immediate coincidence between evil and guilt, goods and goodness, such as may occasionally be experienced in individual cases, gives the least right to expect from God any such correspondence.<sup>1</sup>

He proceeds to show how this idea of government by punishment and reward borrowed from the procedure of an earthly state—at best a merely mechanical relation—is superseded by the organic relation of ground and consequence, and declares that the scheme of retribution in the final judgment is superseded by the analogy of seed and harvest.<sup>2</sup>

The whole passage is somewhat unconvincing, as it hardly seems to make any serious attempt to grapple with the persistent recurrence of the opposite representation in every type of Biblical writing. In his chief work we find the subject treated quite

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 14, 15.

differently. In the first edition he rejected the idea of the reformatory theory of punishment, and sought its whole significance in retributive character. In support of his position, he quotes Kant to the effect that "in every punishment as such, there must first be justice, and this constitutes what is essential to the notion."<sup>1</sup> In later editions we see that he has persuaded himself that this idea of Divine retribution is a Hellenic notion, yet almost immediately he goes on to show that it cannot be considered exclusively Hellenic after all—for it is an idea "that attached itself to the representation of a reciprocal relation of rights between man and God *which is found among the Greeks, Romans, and Israelites* from the fact that with these peoples the state is valued even in a religious sense as the highest good."<sup>2</sup>

Such being the Ritschlian conception of the righteousness of God, we cannot be surprised that the modern theology is utterly deficient in its doctrine of sin. In this respect also, Ritschlianism is in accord with the dominant tendency of the age, which is nowhere more marked than in the attempt to minimize the significance of sin.

In the doctrine of sin, as in all else in the Ritschlian theology, the idea of the kingdom must be regarded as absolutely determinative. Sin is an impossible abstraction unless viewed in connection with that will which it contravenes: evil has no reality in itself save as the contradiction of that good to which it is opposed. It therefore becomes impossible to form any true conception of the nature or effects of sin apart from the corresponding good which

<sup>1</sup> R. V. i. 417.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 343.

Christianity offers. The latter is to be found in the idea of the kingdom consisting of men bound to each other by laws of virtue, bound also to God who loves them in His Son ; the kingdom in which are united man's highest moral and religious ideals. Such is the promise of the kingdom, but, as Augustine says, "*nondum regnat hoc regnum.*" The kingdom is not actually realized, but only in process of development. Whatever, therefore, stands in the way of this development, whatever impedes the realization of its moral and religious aims, whatever is opposed, even unconsciously, to the extension of its sway among men, is therefore to be classed as sin and evil. At an earlier period Ritschl was prepared to allow much weight to the moral law as determining the character of sin : and this moral law found its expression and sanction in the Will of God, its source and its upholder ; but subsequently this view was almost entirely retracted, and the teleological idea of the kingdom of God is used as the supremely regulative conception in this as in all other departments of Christian theology.

Sin, then, is whatever opposes itself to the kingdom. It shows itself in a loss of confidence towards God. But if we have thus discovered its true nature, what of its origin ? Ritschl dismisses the Augustinian theory of original sin, although almost in the same breath appealing to Augustine for the support of his definition. "*Post lapsum Adæ omnes homines secundum naturam propagati nascuntur cum peccato, hoc est sine metu dei, sine fiducia erga deum et cum concupiscentia.*"<sup>1</sup> Though he denies the fact of

<sup>1</sup> Conf. Aug. i. 2.

original sin, Ritschl is not prepared to admit, save theoretically, the possibility of the sinlessness of any member of the human race ; for universal sinfulness is a fact empirically established, which cannot be gainsaid. With regard to anyone born of Christian parents, the knowledge of the kingdom of God involves a knowledge of sin. Born into a kingdom, straining, struggling, often set back, the Christian is no more perfect than the kingdom into which he is born. The child of God falls wherever the kingdom fails ; and thus to be a Christian involves not merely the knowledge of sin, but the practical certainty of sinning. But it is possible to take wider ground. The human will had not in the beginning acquired a full understanding of the perfect good : the will, with its desires for the good, was in a perpetual process of development ; it is a growing quantity incapable of appreciating, still less achieving, the highest good. A universal necessity for sinning cannot be established from a consideration either of the constitution of human nature or of moral evolution, or of any known purpose of God. This argument makes it possible to admit the sinlessness of Jesus as not being in any essential contradiction to His human nature. Sin originates from the impulse to use to the fullest possible extent that freedom with which man is born into the world, and the use of this freedom continually coincides with all those manifold temptations to selfishness which as a matter of fact arise out of the sinfulness of society.<sup>1</sup> Thus we reach the conclusion that "sin is an apparently unavoidable product of the human will under the

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 22.

given conditions of its development, and is yet in the consciousness of our freedom and independence imputed by us to ourselves as guilt.”<sup>1</sup>

The solidarity of the human race, the tangles and complexities of all human relationships, make sin a social rather than an individual matter. Self-assertion and selfishness in every form, rebelling against all ordinances for the common weal, have spread ruin and disease throughout the social order. Such sins in various forms have not merely effected a combination, but have actually become stereotyped in commonly accepted but wholly false standards and principles. Conventional hypocrisies are crystallized into tolerated abuses, which in their turn find embodiment in evil institutions. Thus there arises a *kingdom of sin*,<sup>2</sup> in opposition to *the kingdom of God*. Both in the formation of individual character, as in the regeneration of society, this evil principle, this kingdom of sin, exercises its baneful activity. Surrounded by vicious example and perverted influences, those whose characters are yet undeveloped, whose innocent eyes are yet untrained to pierce the fine-spun web of evil and see the eternal realities, are confronted with the well-nigh resistless power and persuasiveness of sin. Yielding, they commit the sinful act. But the process is not arrested at this point. Sinful acts harden into sinful habits, and sinful habits into sinful character. Thus evil propensities and dispositions are perpetuated, if not inherited, and children are born into a kingdom of sin. This is why infants are baptised—not to do away with original sin, but that they may be trans-

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 360.

<sup>2</sup> *Unterricht*, 23; *R. V.* iii. 320.



lated from the kingdom of sin, with whose guilt all are in some wise infected, into the kingdom of the Son of His love.<sup>1</sup>

The full meaning of sin can only be seen in the light of the kingdom of God ; but its character, as the negation of man's true destiny, of the freedom of the will towards the good, of the ordinance of God, is established in another manner. At all stages in the process of moral development we can trace the power of self-judgment gradually emerging into consciousness. This judgment of self begins in the act of the individual, but it attains to a universal supremacy. For the consciousness of guilt is really the seed of all individual or social judgment of evil. It is the proof that moral freedom has not entirely succumbed to the power of sin : it is in no sense a power that undoes the sinful past, or snaps the cord of sinful habit. This guilt-consciousness has its seat in the conscience ; but conscience, as has been remarked in an earlier chapter, must be regarded as having rather an empirical than an intuitive origin.

It is this feeling of guilt that transforms physical evils into Divine punishments. Ritschl, as we have seen, emphatically repudiates any relation between sin and natural evils. That there is no necessary relation between individual sin and individual suffering is the theme of the loftiest literature of the Old Testament. Whether we recollect the suffering servant of Jehovah, or the example of Job, the teaching is the same, that special calamities do not necessarily imply special guilt. And the same warning to men ready to make rash inferences

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 320, 321.

concerning sorrow and sin is enforced by the Lord. "Suppose ye, they were sinners above all men, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish;"<sup>1</sup> and again, "Neither this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest in him."<sup>2</sup> The apostles, also bearing in mind the example of their Incarnate Lord, looked upon suffering, not in the light of punishment for their sins, but as the highest privilege to which they could be called, for thus they could be nearest their Master and their King, and, called to suffer with Him, they knew that they would also reign with Him in glory.

And yet it is equally clear that not only the Old Testament prophets, but also Christ and His apostles, recognized that God would not let sin go unpunished. The prophets were never tired of insisting that national sin inevitably entailed national punishment—that individual sin merited perpetual chastisement. His blood be upon us and upon our children, cried the frenzied multitude of Jerusalem; and it came to pass, even as He had foretold, that not one stone was left upon another, because the Holy City knew not the time of her visitation. The early Church was quick to see in the sudden death of Ananias and Sapphira, in the revolting disease that sent Herod to his living grave, in the blinding of the sorcerer that withstood the Gospel, signal chastisements for sins of perjury, pride, and hardness of heart. St. Paul knew also how to hand over the obdurate to Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme, that their souls might be saved in the

<sup>1</sup> Lk. xiii. 1-5.

<sup>2</sup> Jn. ix. 1-3.

day of the Lord. It is surely needless to multiply instances. The entire volume of Scripture speaks from almost every page assuring us that wind and storm fulfil His word. The Son of God Himself, with all the plenitude of His Divine power, was not able (*οὐκ ἠδύνατο*) to work His gracious miracles of healing because of their unbelief. Yet over and over again the reward of faith was the saving of both body and soul.

Moreover, although it may be unjustifiable rashly to conclude that individual suffering must be the measure of individual sin, yet this does not do away with the connection between moral and physical evil. "The Son of Man goeth as it is determined," "the Christ must suffer"; in other words, in this world disordered by man's sin, the path of the sinless son of man must be through suffering to victory. It is sin that causes the evil: though it is not always he that doeth the sin that suffereth the full consequence thereof.

Ritschl, on the other hand, appears to ignore the whole trend of Biblical theology in this direction. The theory of the connection between physical evils and moral transgression, he declares, is contrary both to experience and to the teaching of Christ. A man's idea of evil depends upon his temperament, his associations, his manner of thought—in other words, is subjectively conditioned. One man will regard as the loving chastisement of a father's discipline that which another will look upon as an evil well-nigh intolerable. It is the consciousness of guilt which seizes upon some natural disaster, and sees in it a sign of Divine displeasure.

We have seen how summarily Ritschl dismisses the representation as to the Divine judgment at the end of the world. Here, at any rate, there can be no question as to the Scriptural doctrine ; but Ritschl puts the idea of reward and punishment calmly on one side, and seeks to substitute another notion, which after all is not contradictory, but complementary, to the more usual conception.

In much the same way is treated the Scriptural doctrine concerning death as the penalty of sin. It is impossible to deny the teaching of St. Paul on the subject ; but if it is impossible to deny, it is yet possible to discredit. St. Paul, it is argued, only arrived at his conclusion through a scholastic exegesis.<sup>1</sup> The apostolic argument is "no necessary element of the Christian view of the world."

But there is another aspect of sin and guilt on which Ritschl rightly lays the utmost stress. The consciousness of guilt is always accompanied by a feeling of separation from God, by a loss of that trust and confidence towards Him, which can only be possessed by a clean conscience and unstained life. Sin interrupts the communion between the soul and God, and the consciousness of guilt issues in complete separation.

This sense of separation becomes all the more intolerable within the Christian community : for here man recognizes his true vocation in the kingdom of God : here also he recognizes how, in the fulfilment of his vocation, he is perpetually thwarted by that consciousness of guilt, which springs not only from his own sin, but also from his implication in that

<sup>1</sup> *Unterricht*, 22 ; *R. V.* iii. 341.

universal kingdom of sin, in whose common guilt all are partakers. Thus Christianity seems to confront us with a heartless paradox: for the good news of the kingdom serves only to accentuate man's sinful condition. At this stage, the Christian doctrine of redemption comes to solve the riddle, assuring us of divine forgiveness through Christ, and of justification and atonement.

The Christian doctrine of redemption must be conceived as having an entirely spiritual, yet universal significance. It is freed from all those political associations with which it became entangled in Old Testament literature, not to mention those predictions of material welfare which abound even in the loftiest psalms and prophecies. On the other hand, though it must be individually appropriated, it is mediated through the chosen people of God.

This justification or remission of sins, which fits a man for the exercise of his Christian vocation, is partly an act of the Divine will of love. The sinner is received back into communion with God, and permitted to co-operate in the work and final purpose of God Himself, without his guilt or his consciousness of guilt forming any bar to such communion or co-operation. It is important to notice that in Ritschl's scheme, justification does not mean the actual removal of guilt, but only the abolishing of that sense of separation which the consciousness of guilt engenders. "The removal of guilt, and of guilt-consciousness, would be in contradiction to the validity of the rule of truth for God, as also for the conscience of the sinner. . . . The Gospel of Forgiveness of Sins does not remove the feeling of guilt for past sins, but

only the effect of this in separation from God, or the distrust of God inherent in it.”<sup>1</sup> The forgiveness of sins “is to be defined as the removal of the separation which, in consequence of sin, has entered between God and man.”<sup>2</sup> “When God forgives or pardons sin, He gives effect to His Will that the contradiction in which sinners stand to Him, expressed in guilt, shall not hinder their communion with Himself.”<sup>3</sup> “Justification signifies the leading back of the sinner into nearness with God : the removal of the separation from God, resulting from the existing contradiction to God, and the accompanying guilt-consciousness.”<sup>4</sup> Or once more, “Justification or reconciliation is the will of God as Father to admit sinners, notwithstanding their sins and their consciousness of guilt, to that fellowship with Himself, which includes the right of sonship and eternal life.”<sup>5</sup>

The idea of justification or forgiveness of sins includes the more special doctrines of reconciliation with God, and the adoption to sonship. In fact, Ritschl much prefers the idea of adoption to the whole nomenclature of justification. “The attribute of father (implied by our adoption as sons,) stands in relation to the peculiar rights and duties of the fellowship of the family. For this reason, all investigations on the position of God with respect to the forgiveness of sins, hitherto derived from the analogy of the head of a state, of the legal and relatively moral fellowship of the members of a nation, appear incongruent with the Christian idea of God.”<sup>6</sup> One can understand why Ritschl’s intense dislike of any-

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 513.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 96.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 114.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 92.

thing that savoured of scholasticism should lead him to abjure the forensic associations inseparable from the idea of justification ; but his argument seems to apply, with no less force, to the unsuitability of the regulative use of the kingdom of God as the all-controlling conception in his theological scheme.

Such then is the Ritschlian treatment of the idea of justification, which he regards as practically synonymous with forgiveness, reconciliation, and adoption. But there are still four points of great importance which must not be overlooked :

- (i) Are all sins capable of Divine forgiveness ?
- (ii) In what sense may Christ's death be said to be connected with the forgiveness of sins ?
- (iii) Is the society or the individual the proper object of justification ?
- (iv) What is the relation on this theory between justification and sanctification ?

To these four questions a fifth may perhaps be added. In what sense may we speak of the imputation of Christ's merits, by means of which justification can be mediated to sinners ?

(i) Addressing ourselves to the Ritschlian answer to these cardinal problems, we observe with regard to the first, that Ritschl falls into an error which he himself condemns. The true idea of sin can only be attained, on his showing, in contradistinction with the idea of supreme good embodied in the kingdom of God. What then of the sin that exists where the latter conception is neither known nor recognized ? The question is discussed at some length. Such sins are done in ignorance : and because they are done in ignorance, they are capable of pardon. There is



of course much truth in Ritschl's contention. We have the warrant of St. Paul for asserting that God overlooked the sins that were past, in view of that crowning manifestation of Divine righteousness which was yet to come. Again, the Saviour based His prayer for His murderers—and surely for others than the Jews that sought, the Romans that sanctioned, the soldiers that carried out the sentence of death—on the ground that they knew not what they did, thereby implying, that sins done with a full knowledge might be outside the reach even of the Saviour's intercession, beyond the bounds of Divine forgiveness, even as, under the old dispensation, for presumptuous sins done with a high hand no sacrifice could be offered. Ritschl has thus apprehended a truth : but, as in many other instances in the Ritschlian theology, the apprehension of a truth leads to its exaggeration. For Ritschl himself objects to the doctrine of original sin, because it abolishes all distinction between the different grades of sin ; yet his theory does practically the same, for we are left with only two classes of sin, those done in ignorance, and those in defiance of the known will of God. Moreover, while ignorance will of course be taken into account—for, if St. Peter, following the Master's example, could excuse his countrymen, *and now, brethren, I know that in ignorance ye did it*, and shall not the Heavenly Father hearken to His Son's prevailing intercession, *for they know not what they do?*—yet it seems utterly impossible to suppose that the fact of ignorance is the exclusive standard of Divine judgment. “Sin,” says Ritschl, “is judged not as the definite design of contradicting the known will of God, but as

ignorance.”<sup>1</sup> Thus Ritschl, “in his theory of sin, plants himself upon the ground of the Greek intellectualism, which he elsewhere so sharply criticises.”<sup>2</sup>

(ii) We now come to the next question, as to how far the forgiveness of sins is to be connected with “the sacrifice of the death of Christ.” Ritschl does not trouble to deny what is incapable of denial. He admits that the Christian church has not come by the assurance of redemption or forgiveness of sins through any such promise that Christ might have made as the revealer of God in the fulfilment of His prophetic vocation. On the contrary, He Himself, and after Him the oldest witnesses connect that promise of redemption with the fact of His death. Moreover, the sacrificial aspect of Christ’s death brings it into natural comparison with the sacrifices of the Old Testament, particularly with those that accompanied and ratified the inauguration of the Sinaitic covenant, and still more with those yearly remembrances of that covenant on the day of atonement, whereby the forgiveness of sins was symbolically effected and the covenant bond renewed and preserved in its integrity.<sup>3</sup>

Christ fulfilled those ancient sacrifices both as victim and as priest; and this necessitates an examination into what the Jewish sacrifices really were intended to effect.

Ritschl, whose knowledge of Old Testament no less than New Testament exegesis strikes one as amazingly deep and comprehensive (even though he may be guilty of partial selection and intermittent

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 363.

<sup>2</sup> Pfeiderer, *Die Ritschl’sche Theologie*, 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht*, 31.

insight) claims that the sacrifices of the Israelites were in no way connected with the removal of guilt, but were the gifts of those already within the covenant to assure them of their communion with Jehovah. The LXX translators made a mistake when they chose to render נִפֵּר (to cover) by ἱλάσκεσθαι (to propitiate). "The protective covering of the offerers from the face of God includes in general no reference to the sins of the same, but has respect only to the effect that they are perishable men."<sup>1</sup> The essence of sacrifice, therefore, was to remove that distrust which formed the obstacle to free and perfect communion; and it was just this that the death of Christ most effectively accomplished. Christ's death was the culminating act in a life of unswerving obedience, by which Christ maintained His own nearness to the Father, and displayed His superiority to the world. And this kingly and priestly vocation is potentially realized in all members of His community. In Him the new position of humanity before God is vindicated and assured. "Christ's death in the view of the Apostles is the compendious expression for the fact that Christ has inwardly maintained His religious unity with God and this revelation principle in the whole course of His life."<sup>2</sup> So also justification is connected with the death of Christ "by the positive determination of the worth of the sufferings of Christ as occasion of His patience, and as proof of His fidelity in His vocation and of the steadfastness of His faith."<sup>3</sup> Christ, therefore, by the sacrifice of His life re-establishes the sinner's confidence to Godward and

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* 204.<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* ii. 511.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 524.

dispels his distrust, and thus a true atonement is effected and reconciliation made between man and God.

But Christ is not only our victim, but our priest; and in the ending of His life, no less than in His lifelong fidelity to His vocation, He fulfilled perfectly all priestly ideals. Ritschl develops this conception of Christ's execution of the priestly office for Himself at great length, and concludes that it was in nearness to God that the priestly ideal found its realization. Orr pronounces this theory of Ritschl's "a lame and inconsequential attempt at interpretation,"<sup>1</sup> but an impartial and entirely independent study of the Old Testament passages bearing on the subject has convinced the writer that it was not so much in the circle of sacrificial ideas, as in the conceptions of personal holiness, constant access to God, and effectual intercession for his fellow-men that the priestly ideal proved most fruitful, and that an office so lofty and so beneficent might well be associated (as indeed it was in later prophecy) with the royal dignity.<sup>2</sup>

Christ, then, maintained His own nearness to God, but it was that He might bring others near. The key-text for this interpretation he finds in 1 Peter, iii. 18: "Christ also hath once suffered for sins . . . that He might bring us to God."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Ritschlian Theology*, 154.

<sup>2</sup> A reference may perhaps be permitted to the section on *the Priest* in the author's "Value of Prophecy," 337-354.

<sup>3</sup> *Unterricht*, 34; *R. V.* 214. Ritschl also compares Eph. ii. 16-18; Heb. vii. 19, x. 19-22; and in the same sense Jn. xvii. 19; Heb. x. 14. He might have compared 1 Pet. ii. 18-25, where occurs the remarkable phrase, "who His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree that we having died unto sins might live unto righteousness." To quote from the most recent commentary: "The turn which St. Peter has

Though Ritschl does well to emphasize the priestly character of Christ's work, and to insist that through His perfect execution of the priest's office He has won for us also that nearness to God which He maintained for Himself, having made us a kingdom and priests to God and His Father, yet it can scarcely be contended that he does full justice to the Old Testament idea of sacrifice or to the phraseology of the New Testament with reference to the propitiatory character of Christ's death. We may, by way of contrast, quote the restrained but impressive language in which some modern writers seek to interpret the language of St. Paul on this very subject. They speak of the death of Christ as "a great cosmical act, the nature of which we are not able to understand, but which at least presents analogies to the rite of sacrifice, and to that particular form of the rite which has for its object propitiation. The whole sacrificial system was symbolical, and its wide diffusion showed that it was a mode of religious expression specially appropriate to that particular stage in the world's development. Was it to lapse entirely with Christianity? The writers of the New Testament practically answer, No. The necessity for it still existed; the great fact of sin and guilt remained. There was still the same bar to the offering of acceptable worship. To meet this fact and to remove this bar there had been enacted an event which possessed the significance of sacrifice.

given to the words represents Christ not only as the sin-offering who bore the consequences of the sins of His people on the Cross of shame (*ἤνεγκεν ἐπὶ τῷ ξύλῳ*), but as the priest who took the sins, or the sin-offering (*ἡ ἁμαρτία, τὰ περὶ τῆς ἁμαρτίας*), and laid the sacrifice on the altar of the Cross (*ἀνένεγκεν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον*)."

And to that event the New Testament writers appealed as satisfying the conditions which the righteousness of God required."<sup>1</sup> To this we may add that if it is impossible to eliminate the conception of sacrifice from the New Testament, the idea of propitiation is not less firmly established, and to the question, "Who is propitiated?" only one answer can be returned; but that is an answer for any echo of which we listen in vain from the Ritschlian theology.

(iii) The consideration of the third point brings us to a question which has aroused much controversy. In no particular has the Ritschlian theology been more persistently or more bitterly attacked than in its description of the society as the proper object of justification. On the other hand, in no particular can Ritschlianism claim with better reason to present a true exposition of Biblical theology. "Justification or reconciliation relates, in the first instance, to the whole of the religious community founded by Christ which maintains the Gospel of the grace of God as the primary means of its continuance, and to individuals on the condition that they enrol themselves in this community through faith in the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> The Ritschlian position is based upon a double line of argument: (*a*) the analogy of the Old Testament, (*b*) the express statements of the New.

Under (*a*) we have the fact that all the sacrifices were of avail only for those already within the covenant. We have a detailed account of the manner in which the covenant embracing the whole people was inaugurated with sacrifice, which is strangely typical of Christ's redeeming death. Still more does

<sup>1</sup> S. H., *Romans*, p. 89.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 132; cf. 545, 546.

the ritual of the day of atonement undoubtedly concentrate attention upon a sacrifice for sins whereby the whole community could obtain forgiveness.

(b) Coming to the New Testament, we are confronted with a series of phrases no less remarkable, e.g. Acts xx. 28: *the Church of God which He purchased through His own blood*,<sup>1</sup> and Eph. v. 25: *Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for her that He might sanctify her*.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, Orr, with an almost savage scorn, points to such expressions as Rom. iii. 26<sup>3</sup>: *(the Father) justifieth him that is of the faith of Jesus*.<sup>4</sup> But such and similar individualistic language would not justify our rejection, without more ado, of words which point just as strongly to the opposite conclusion. The two forms of expression need in no sense be considered as being necessarily in contradiction. For, as Ritschl himself points out, the community consists in its members,<sup>5</sup> or, to quote Ecke, the community is not "ein blosses Gedankending." The members receive all the benefits of the body—His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.

It is indeed remarkable—almost inconceivable to modern ideas—how deeply this idea of fellowship in a body cut into the heart and soul of Jew and Christian in the days that are gone. To the exiled

<sup>1</sup> τὴν ἐκκλησίαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἣν περιποιήσατο διὰ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου.

<sup>2</sup> ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἑαυτὸν παρέδωκεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς ἵνα αὐτὴν ἀγιάσῃ καθαρίσας κ.τ.λ.

<sup>3</sup> Orr quotes as ii. 26. The references in this otherwise excellent handbook are not always reliable, largely no doubt owing to fresh editions of the works cited.

<sup>4</sup> δικαιούντα τὸν ἐκ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ.

<sup>5</sup> R.V. ii. 160, 161.



Jew exclusion from the sanctuary was almost equivalent to exclusion from God. Cut off from the company and worship of the faithful, he felt himself cut off from God, the object of their worship. He had, however, unintentionally forsaken the Lord ; he lived in a constant dread that the Lord might therefore have forsaken him.

We find it hard to suppress a superior smile at such misgivings, but the early Christians would have experienced no such aloofness. For, however strongly we may be justified in asserting that at all times and in all places acceptable prayer may both be offered and answered ; yet, if the promises of Scripture, if the teaching of Christ, if the practice of the apostles are to have any weight, distinctive and particular blessings are attached to united prayer, to common worship. The Lord refused to recognize His disciples as a mere conglomeration of individual units. He proclaimed a kingdom, an organized society, an all-embracing Church. Into *it* all believers were to be baptized ; to *its* gatherings for worship the Lord promised His special presence ; through *its* ministerial hands the first disciples received the bread from Heaven. There was no such thing as a merely individualistic Christianity ; there was no such person as a Christian unattached. Of course, the blessings given to the Church as a whole must be individually realized, individually appropriated ; each member must use and treasure the privileges of the whole body ; yet it is as members of the body that believers receive grace and strength from the Head. A limb severed from the body could not claim to receive nourishment from the Head. On this point

the apostolic witness is unanimous and decisive. The Church is His body; we are one body, and severally members one of another. All must be done in order that there be no schism in the body. Christians must not forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is. The highest act of Christian worship implies a sense of fellowship, for the word communion does not merely mean participation of or in Christ, but *joint* participation, joint partaking of the sacred body and blood. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the Holy Ghost are the priceless heirloom of each individual Christian; yet they too are only the inheritance of each one, because they are the rightful possession of "you all."

If such were the spirit in apostolic days, we certainly should not be surprised to find that the society rather than the individual was regarded as the direct object of justification. To St. Paul excommunication from the body involved separation from Christ. To be cut off from the faithful involved the fearful risk of losing faith and the object of faith. To profess love for God and to manifest no love for the brethren was to state a self-contradiction and to attempt to live an impossible lie.

So also Christ came to redeem mankind, and our redemption was made perfect by His death; but just as the good news of redemption and salvation was preached through the ministers of His Church, so through the same ministry appointed for the salvation of mankind were the benefits of Christ's redemption mediated to all believers, not as individual Christians only, but as individuals joined

together, welded together in one body, and thus as members of one another and of Christ. Outside this body, outside these covenanted means of grace, outside the ark of Christ's Church, there could be no certainty, no security of salvation. *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Of course this must not be taken to imply that everyone who is not a churchman in the strictly limited sense, cannot therefore be saved. After all, baptism by whomsoever administered, constitutes the entrance into the church of Christ: nor would any Christian think for one moment of laying down the laws under which Christ *must* act to save sinners.

When we reflect on all these things, when we remember also that the profession of faith and baptism were in apostolic days and long afterwards regarded as absolutely inseparable, and that the same act by which he is mystically united to Christ also signalizes his entrance into Christian society with all its privileges and blessings, "it is natural to identify the area within which grace and justification operate with the Church." "It is thus neither in the spirit of exclusiveness nor yet in that of any hard and fast scholasticism but only in accordance with the free and natural tendencies of the Apostle's thought, that we speak of justification as normally mediated through the Church. . . . The Christian sacrifice with its effects, like the sacrifices of the Day of Atonement by which it is typified, reach the individual through the community."<sup>1</sup>

(iv) We have thus every reason to be grateful to Ritschlianism for recalling us to the primitive con-

<sup>1</sup> S.H., *Romans*, 123, 124.

ception of the Church as the direct object of justification. But it is the fate of Ritschl to provoke disappointment no less than admiration: and hardly have we accepted his arguments in one direction with gratitude, than we are compelled to dissent with vehemence from his conclusions in another. Thus, while agreeing with Ritschlianism as to the justification of individuals through the society, we are next asked to accept a theory as to the relation between justification and sanctification which would inevitably land us in inextricable confusion. For though Ritschl appears to hold that justification is purely a "religious" as opposed to a "moral" notion, that its significance is exhausted in the idea of eternal life, and has no reference to good works of any kind,<sup>1</sup> yet he is driven by the exigencies of his original theory of knowledge to a very different conclusion. "It is only possible to learn to know the acts of God, justification, the new birth, the communication of the Spirit . . . by the analysis of the corresponding self-activities in which the workings of God are appropriated by men. . . . Outside the self-activity in which we appropriate the workings of God and realize them for our own salvation, we have no understanding of the objective dogmas as religious truths."<sup>2</sup> The removal of guilt, *i.e.* justification, puts an end to the enmity of the will against God, and involves the appropriation of the Divine purpose as our own highest self-end. Justification can in fact only be known by the good works which are the

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 465, 503; but this representation is practically contradicted, iii. 75, 77, 167.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* iii. 33, 34.

outcome of the sinner's reconciliation with God. Thus *justitia imputata* passes insensibly into *justitia infusa*; and "regeneration . . . can as predicate of the individual believer in point of fact not be distinguished from justification or reconciliation or adoption."<sup>1</sup> Thus once more the objective fades away: reality can only be known "as mirrored in the subject": and subjective representation, value-judging perhaps, takes the place of objective reality.

(v) With reference to the theory of the imputation of Christ's merits, Ritschlianism is supposed to be a protest against the ordinary doctrine. As re-formulated by Ritschl, the dogma runs thus: "The admission of the members of the Christian community to fellowship with God notwithstanding their sins and feeling of guilt, which is expressed in the forgiveness of sins, has its typical exemplification and historical ground in the fellowship of Christ with God which he maintained unbroken in the whole course of His life, especially in His willingness to suffer for the sake of His vocation, and in His patience, exercised even unto death."<sup>2</sup> This does not tell us much; and in what it does say, it does not err on the side of lucidity. After a short interval we come across a clearer statement. "God imputes to the community belonging to Christ the position in relation to the love of God in which He maintained Himself through His obedience."<sup>3</sup> But earlier in the book he speaks in a manner scarcely to be distinguished from that of orthodox theology: "The worth which one has as an object of love is imputed to those who themselves lack this worth, but belong to him who is the primary

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 566, 567.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* 514.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 516.

object of love. The position of Christ to God is imputed to His disciples, since God for Christ's sake accepts them into His effective love. But the position of Christ to God depends on His righteousness. Indirectly, therefore, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His disciples, in order that they may be taken up into the love of God, as Christ is rooted in the same."

We need say but little concerning Ritschl's conception of the new life. Humility, prayer and patience are to be its main characteristics : but petitionary prayer should be excluded, and thanksgiving and resignation take its place, for it is idle to suppose "that man can exercise the least influence on the Divine counsels."<sup>1</sup> It is enough for a man to rest content in the conviction that all things work together for good to them that love God.

As to the future, though Ritschl does not deny the blessed hope of everlasting life, he says but little on the subject. Professor Swing enthusiastically claims that the resurrection of Christ is the foundation of the whole Ritschlian theology. In which case it is passing strange that there should only be three or four ambiguous allusions to that stupendous fact in the three great volumes on Christian doctrine. And it is specially strange that one whose profession is to set the Christian revelation over every type of natural theology, should base the argument for immortality on natural grounds, and make no allusion to the fact which the apostles recognized as the only sure basis of Christian hope.<sup>2</sup>

The silence of Ritschl as to the future life is not

<sup>1</sup> *R. V.* iii. 608.

<sup>2</sup> *R. V.* 576.

accidental, but an essential feature of the whole system. "If eternal life is defined as supremacy *over the world* . . . what would be its meaning for a state in which this world had ceased to exist? If, again, the Divine self-end which man is to realize is a Divine kingdom of human beings *upon earth*, what end remains when the believer is transferred to conditions beyond death? . . . Who can tell? The whole Ritschlian nomenclature loses its significance." <sup>1</sup>

We have felt bound to devote considerable attention to the discussion of these doctrines as expounded by Ritschl, not so much because of their intrinsic interest or importance, as because it is round these twin ideas of justification and reconciliation Ritschl has himself sought to nucleate all his labours in doctrinal theology. We cannot leave the subject without a tribute to the vast learning, acute insight, wide scholarship, and systematic powers of this great theologian. Ponderous and cumbersome as is the style, one is yet irresistibly brought to realize that one is in the hands of a masterful personality; and that beneath the involved arguments and sentences, regardless of style, there burn the deep fires of profound original thought. Yet it is almost impossible not to experience that same alternation of attraction and repulsion which was so noticeable a feature in Ritschl's own sentiments towards those from whom he learnt. At times there seems such an obstinate refusal to understand another point of view, so calm a tone of complete self-assurance, such unmistakable signs of a deliberate determination to go

<sup>1</sup> Orr, *Ritschlian Theology*, 181.



one's own way, not because it is right, but because it is of one's own choosing, that one cares not to take this imperious master as a certain guide. One cannot help feeling a tinge of sadness at the prospect of much energy misspent: but yet, we doubt not, he did the work whereunto he was called: if it were only to put new life into those very doctrines which he sought to destroy. But he has done more. His vigorous intellect and wide learning combined to throw much new light on many problems of theology. We cannot, however, regard his arguments as exhaustive or convincing. On the other hand, we can see how a low estimate of sin involves a low estimate of redemption; and how this again leads to a humanitarian view of the Redeemer. Both in its correspondence with the facts of life, and experience, and in its natural method of Biblical exegesis, we think catholic theology vastly superior to Ritschlianism, even in that sphere of justification and reconciliation which the founder of the school made specially his own.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

*By their fruits shall ye know them.* Let us, therefore, consider first not what the Ritschlian theology is, but what it has done. By this method, we shall be judging Ritschlianism in harmony with Ritschlian principles, for we shall be applying a species of value-judgment to the new theology.

Ritschl spoke what many thought, when he denounced the alliance of theology with metaphysics. A philosophy of religion may have great attractions for minds predisposed to speculative efforts: for theological problems, more than all others, go to the root of those ultimate questions concerning reality, with which every philosophy tries to deal. It is, therefore, a real delight to many, an occupation most absorbing, to deal with theology by way of metaphysics. But what, then, becomes of practical religion? History shows that interest in theoretical speculation need have no bearing whatever on the ordinary religious life or moral duties. Indeed the latter have too often suffered from the former. The value of pure religion needs no external recommendation; it is its own witness. But that witness is perpetually obscured by the professedly religious

interest taken in problems quite alien to the real spirit of religion. Jesus saith, "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband. . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Similarly, religion has often decayed when theology has flourished: for the introduction of wholly irrelevant questions tends to draw away man's interest and effort from the main business of life—to know himself perfectly free in the service of God.

But it is not merely that theology has done no good to religion; it has brought positive discredit upon it. For the main stream of philosophical thought in these latter days has been to insist upon the subjectivity and relativity of human thought; but theology claims to be the bearer of an absolute revelation, perfect and final, knowing nothing of those limitations of the human mind which both philosophy and psychology are bringing daily into clearer relief. On every side, voices were heard professing willingness, like Herod of old, "to come and worship Him also," if, worshipping, they might destroy. Abate your excessive claims, eliminate the supernatural element, and we are ready to own ourselves followers of the Crucified. It was to an age profoundly distrustful of metaphysical speculation, tremendously awake to reason's limitations, yet sincerely desirous of preserving religious sentiment, that Ritschl addressed his appeal: and not in vain. In no sense whatever did Ritschl seek to throw doubt or discredit on religion; he sought, and sought successfully, to give

it new life and power. At first, as has already been remarked, the cry was raised, "theology without metaphysics," but the inherent impossibility of such a watchword soon became manifest, and a more satisfactory formula was found in the demand for religion without theology.

The aim of the Ritschlians was therefore the restoration of true religion ; and in this task, as they conceived it, they were all united. That the attempt to divorce religion from theology, faith from knowledge, is foredoomed to failure, we shall hope to show when discussing the reasons why it is impossible to accept Ritschlianism as any adequate substitute for the traditional faith of Christendom. At present, we will confine our attention to the positive achievements of the Ritschlian theology ; and foremost among these must be placed the sincerity and genuineness of its whole-hearted efforts to commend religion to an age of doubt and scepticism. Nor can it be denied that these efforts were without some measure of success. To many it came as little short of a revelation, that a life ruled by religion did not necessarily involve the immediate acceptance of the entire body of traditional theology. Ritschlianism may be, in our opinion it is, mistaken in asserting the ultimate irreconcilableness of theology with religion, but, it did real service in emphasizing the value of religion at a time when theology was widely discredited.

If we ask how the separation between religion and theology was to be effected, we come to the now famous theory of value-judgments. Here again we may be grateful to the Ritschlian school for their insistence on the practical motive of all religious

belief. These practical value-judgments are as different as possible from the cool, unimpassioned judgments of the theoretic reason. The untrained ear cannot appreciate a musical masterpiece nor can the untrained eye recognize the beauty of the loveliest art. In either case the music or the picture may be explained, scientifically described, illustrated; but just that which constitutes the real value is perforce ignored. There is no judgment of value, only a judgment of existence. It is a capacity for music that makes men appreciate its elevating power: it is a taste for art that enables men to recognize its beauty. Similarly it is the religious feeling in the subject that gives to religion its real value and power. A coarse and brutal nature could not appreciate the matchless beauty and tenderness of the Gospel portrait of our Redeemer King. Yet it is here in the inner significance, not in the outward fact, that the true value of religion lies: for it is concerned with a practical matter, the saving of the soul, the rising to freedom and communion with God; not with the theoretical speculations as to the distinction of persons within the Deity, nor metaphysical investigations as to the nature of the Christ. To know the doctrine, we must do the will of God. To know the Christ, we must first submit to Him, that our souls may be flooded with His grace, and that, the eyes of our understanding being opened, we may be able to comprehend with all saints that which passeth knowledge—His inestimable love. It is impossible for a non-Christian to give a true interpretation of Christ. It is those who have felt, that know; it is those that know, who love. And the love of Christ alters

one's whole view of Christian truth, as the light that streams through a rich window of painted glass. Much that before was obscure, becomes clear: we see the figures as the artist pictured them: we recognize fresh beauty, new significance. For the light makes all things manifest.

We thank Ritschl for that thought. It is not that he in any way originated it. It is a patristic commonplace. But he recalled it, he revived it. It is the truth that the doctrine of value-judgments is intended to safeguard. It is the truth that led Ritschl to break with the Tübingen school, and to declare in the forefront of his great dogmatic volume that "religious faith does not run counter to a historical view of Jesus, and the historical estimate of Jesus does not first begin when a man has rid himself of this faith, this religious valuation of his person."<sup>1</sup> It is the truth which finds expression in Ritschl's insistence that the theologian must reckon himself as a member of the community. It is a truth of exceptional value which needs to be perpetually enforced in an age of undogmatic Christianity and presuppositionless histories of Christ and His Church. The Ritschlian school contends with earnestness that in religion it is the practical motive that is the real test of reality, it is the value-judgments that yield the highest truth. Had the Ritschlians only been content with a thorough and consistent unfolding of this principle in its various ramifications and applications, we should have had no cause to withhold our sincerest gratitude. When, however, the judgments of value are made the ground

<sup>1</sup>R. V. iii. 2.

for the depreciations of the judgments of existence ; and the conclusions of practical religion are supposed to be independent of and irreconcilable with the results of the theoretic reason, we are obliged to limit our praise with many qualifications.

The value-judgments play a determinative part in Ritschlian theology. The old theistic arguments in proof of God are abandoned as metaphysical speculations, and valueless for religious purposes, and in their place we are introduced to a practical idea of God. *God is love*, that is the golden text which unlocks the myriad riddles of the universe. So have many others felt ; but Ritschl with almost monotonous persistence drives the text home to the heart of modern theology, and it is well. Once more, however, we are compelled to temper praise with strong dissent when we come to the conclusions that Ritschl would have us draw from these premises.

But perhaps the greatest service of Ritschlianism to theology has been to restore the prominence attached to the kingdom of God. It is not merely that we thus arrive at a teleological interpretation of the world, infinitely richer and deeper than the scientific doctrine of mechanical causation : it is not merely that we are back to the evangelical teaching of the Lord, for which the prophets prepared, and which the apostles interpreted, but we have a conception of Christianity in which dogmatics and ethics may become united, which answers to the social needs of our day, and which is at the same time in completest accord with the teaching of Holy Scripture. Whether the doctrine of the kingdom can be *the* regulative idea of all other Christian conceptions,



whether it can be an absolutely exhaustive category for all Christian doctrine, may perhaps be doubted. But it is a merit of the Ritschlian theology—not to be denied or decried—that it has once more concentrated attention on that magnificent conception of a universal moral kingdom of God, which was on the one hand the central thought of our Lord's proclamation, and which on the other He has taught us to pray for as that far off divine event to which the whole creation moves.

It is in their doctrine of the kingdom, as the norm of all Christian theology, that the Ritschlians have done the most valuable work. But they have also something to tell us of the king, to which we shall do well to be attentive. It may be impossible for us to accept a non-miraculous history of the Son of God—yet even here Ritschlianism has much to teach us concerning the Christ. It is above all things "important to remind mankind again and again that a *man* of the name of Jesus Christ once stood in their midst."<sup>1</sup> To this task Ritschlianism has boldly applied itself. To it the historical Christ is the sole principle of revelation, to whom all things must be referred. The frank recognition by all the theologians of this school of His sinlessness, of His marvellous power over the hearts and consciences of men, of the attraction of His personality, which centuries have shewn themselves unable to efface, of the full revelation of the Father in Him, of the perfect grace and truth, manifested in His earthly life, of His victory over death, of His exaltation and perpetual sovereignty in heavenly places—the

<sup>1</sup> Harnack, *What is Christianity?* 1.

recognition of all these things entitles Ritschlianism to a hearing from those who would learn things new as well as old concerning Christ. We rise from the Ritschlian portrait of Christ, constrained to say, "Was Christ a man like us? Ah! let us try if we then too can be such men as He."<sup>1</sup>

The Ritschlians, it is true, contend vigorously for the Godhead of our Lord, while rejecting the traditional account of His divine and human natures. Here, too, we may learn, even if we do not agree. For no one has ever yet been saved by the scholastic doctrine of Christ's divinity. In this sphere, too, religion demands a living faith, a practical motive. Christ is God to us, because, seeing Him we have seen the Father. Christ is God to us, because in Him we become partakers of His heavenly kingdom. Christ is God to us, because our life is hid with Him in God. Ritschlianism knows how close, how tender, how warm the relation of the believer is to his Lord, and therefore bids us put away all cold speculations and barren theories, and seeing in the Lord Jesus the bearer of a perfect revelation, and the mediator of a perfect religion, exclaim with Thomas, *My Lord and my God*.

There is yet one further point in which Ritschlianism has taught a lesson of abiding value to the Church of these latter days. Is the society or the individual the direct object of justification? The question has been discussed with unnecessary, and even unseemly warmth. But no one can deny that Ritschl's exposition of the doctrine, and of the Scriptural passages bearing on the subject, marks a

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Arnold, Sonnets, *The Better Part*.

real contribution to the literature of justification: or that his insistence upon the society as the proper object of redemption—surprising as it is in the mouth of a Lutheran—is based upon an impartial and illuminating exegesis, which is valuable not only as an original interpretation of Scriptural doctrine, but, like the correlative conception of the kingdom of God, supplies a much needed corrective to the individualistic tendencies of a selfish age.

There is therefore much in Ritschlianism for which we may be grateful. The attempt to free the simple message of the Gospel from scholastic subtleties and philosophical intellectualism demands our heartiest sympathy. The desire to win to a life in Christ men, to whom the affirmations of the creed have ceased to bear a living significance, is worthy of all support. The acknowledgment that practical judgments of value are at least equally important with theoretic judgments of existence, no one would care to dispute. The conception of theology as a whole, and the claim for Christianity to develop, if it will, its own system, its own philosophy, deserves all respect. The all-embracing conception of the kingdom of God, compels admiration, and commands assent. The doctrine of Christ the Revealer is full of power. The importance attached to the society is not misplaced. Ought we not, therefore, to proffer sympathy and withhold criticism? That can only be answered when we have discussed those other points where the Ritschlian system differs from, and we believe manifests its inferiority to, the traditional theology of the Church.

Ritschl begins with affirming the necessity of an

epistemological theory for any theologian. It is on his theory of knowledge that his theology is really based. For the Ritschlian system assumes as a fundamental presupposition the ultimate unknowability of the things underlying phenomena. Hence the impossibility of ever arriving at religious truth or reality by metaphysical or speculative methods. Accordingly, some other method must be devised, for an uncertain faith is a self-contradiction. Ritschl finds the solution in a theory of cognition which draws a line of absolute demarcation between religious and theoretic knowledge. This distinction *within knowledge itself* is the keystone of the Ritschlian system. The questions thus raised are not primarily religious but metaphysical. Religion as such has no interest in deciding between different theories of knowledge, save to see that under the exigencies of epistemological theory her more precious truths do not vanish away εἰς χαυνὸν ἀέρα. But Ritschlianism not only bases with the utmost deliberation theology upon a theory of knowledge, but has chosen for the latter a theory which is fundamentally false. Knowledge cannot be divided into two independent sections; there must be unity. It is impossible to hold with religious knowledge as true that which the theoretic reason pronounces false. If there is contradiction, we must seek a solution—because the intellect instinctively demands consistency and coherency of thought. Either it must be shown that the two views do not really oppose each other, or that they are capable of being harmonized and reconciled in a wider, more comprehensive truth. It is impossible to divide knowledge in such a way that

two mutually opposing views are both ultimately true. Otherwise we might as well give up once for all the attempt to think consistently. Now there are certain spheres in which religion must meet philosophy and science. There is the doctrine of God, the belief in miracles. It is quite impossible to escape, though we may evade, the difficulty by insisting on the differences between a religious and a scientific view of the world. Of course there is such a difference: of course there are different ways of regarding truth: but there are not two truths, two realities. Yet that is the impossible position into which Ritschlianism inevitably leads us.

Precisely similar is the attempt to insist upon the historical character of the Christian religion and yet to claim its entire indifference to historical criticism. The historic Christ is *the* positive principle of Christian revelation. But how are we to obtain a knowledge of the historic Christ, save through the evangelical records and the apostolic testimony? The absurdity of maintaining the historical character of Revelation, and at the same time seeking to establish the reality of that revelation on grounds wholly independent of historical investigations is self evident.

We thus come to the theory of value-judgments. Much in this respect upon which the Ritschlian school lay emphasis is undoubtedly true; and we acknowledge its truth with gladness. But after a display of much ingenuity we are still faced with many problems that are left with the most unsatisfying answer. Do these judgments of value necessarily lead to objective truth? May they not express an artificial or conventional value, with no real reference

to intrinsic worth? What is it that gives these judgments of value an objective character? What test can we apply to their truth? Do they also involve judgments of existence, and if so, are they ultimately dependent upon theoretic knowledge?

To these questions Ritschlianism offers no clear and consistent answer. Indeed one position after another has become logically untenable, until we are told that "judgments of value stand not in opposition to so-called judgments of existence but to the theoretic judgments of science, regarded as excluding every subjective interest," and the difference after all is reduced to this, "that religious judgments of value include the highest subjective interest in knowledge." This, however, is a knocking at open doors. No one would deny that "experience will decide." Yet what makes experience possible? All would admit that the certainty of faith is not the result of theoretic knowledge, but of personal conviction. The only question is, whence does this personal conviction originate? The Ritschlian theory, or theories as we should say bearing in mind the diversities of the school, give us no help in this matter. We are left wholly in the dark as to the real basis of value-judgments: and we begin to feel that they are a convenient device for discrediting older methods while not in reality offering any sure ground for a constructive restatement of theology.

The Ritschlian theory of knowledge, and the accompanying doctrine of value-judgments, are no mere incidental parts of his system, but are vital to it. The result is seen in the unsparing denunciation of mysticism, the rejection of the speculative proofs

of the existence of God, and the condemnation of all ecclesiastical dogma.

Ritschl repudiates mysticism utterly. On no point does he declare himself more plainly ; and he is followed by all the school. Kaftan indeed declares that Ritschl failed to distinguish between the mystical elements to be found in all religions, and the mysticism which he characterizes as a false conception of religion. There are three reasons why Ritschlianism can have no truce with mysticism. Ritschl's theory of cognition forbids him to assert that God can in any way be known save in His operations ; compels him also to deny the existence of the soul save as a complex of psychical activities. Mysticism speaks much of the soul indwelt by God. This Ritschl roughly brushes aside as mere fiction. We cannot know God save in His operations : we cannot know His actions save as reflected in the corresponding self-activities in ourselves. The soul existing only in its functions, God known only in His operations—such a theory leaves no room for any doctrine of a mystical union between the soul and God.

Another reason which makes mysticism impossible in the Ritschlian system is the fact that this theology professes to derive *all* from God's self-revelation in the historic Christ. "All men assuredly are not the sons of God" ; there is no original bond between the soul and God ; there is no such thing as natural religion, nor any such thing as original sin. It is simply as members of Christ's community that we are able to call God our Father ; it is only and solely through the impression that we receive from



the perusal of Christ's historic life that we rise to the assurance that our sins are forgiven and that we can hold communion with God. The whole process is historical, and, by a strange irony we may say, objectively conceived, not mystical, nor subjectively conceived. Ritschlianism insists that mysticism necessitates a pantheistic view of the world, which the historical revelation in Jesus stamps as false. The Ritschlian theologians point with justice to the fact that mysticism is, in no sense, of Christian origin; and therefore they condemn it equally with all metaphysical speculation. For in the Christian religion they will have nothing that did not originate in the Christian revelation. Hence the tendency to mysticism which has always been apparent in Christianity is relegated by Ritschl to the unabsorbed ideas of paganism taken over by, and constantly recrudescing in, the Catholic church.

The third argument for the rejection of mysticism is a marvellous feat of reasoning. Ritschlianism views the work of Christ as being operative for the community, and that it is only as members of the society that we become partakers of the benefits of Christ's death and passion. We seem to be approaching an ecclesiastical exclusiveness which is often attributed to Catholicism; but Ritschl accuses Catholicism of individualism! Mysticism is essentially individual; it can, therefore, find a home in the Catholic church! But Ritschlianism, which knows nothing of an individual Christian, but only of members of a redeemed community, can find no chamber, howsoever small or hidden, where mysticism may dwell.

As illustrating the entirely uncompromising atti-

tude of Ritschlianism towards the least trace of mysticism, we may point to the language of these theologians concerning the exalted Christ. No words can be too lofty to describe His session at the right hand of the Majesty on high; but "*both as pre-existent and as exalted, Christ is hidden from our eyes,*" and "*there can be no talk of communion with Him.*" Kaftan's favourite formula to describe the Christian life as *hid with Christ in God*, from which he concludes that a mystical element must be admitted into the religious life and thought of Christians, is expressly rejected as warranting no such conclusion.

If, then, the Ritschlian view of religion compels us to refuse admission to those high and holy thoughts and experiences, which Christian saints in all ages have recognized as manifested in the indwelling power of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the believer's soul, no less does it impoverish the intellectual side of Christian faith. A few words will be said later in conclusion as to the irreconcilable conflict that Ritschlianism assumes to exist between reason and religion. At present we can do no more than refer to the unhesitating rejection of the so-called theistic proofs. It may at once be admitted that the existence of God cannot be proved to us in the same sense as a mathematical demonstration that would compel belief. Faith is always free; there is not, and cannot be, any inevitable overpowering of the human mind in matters of religious faith. Yet there are ways along which we may approach God; ways which are not to be rejected because they do not yield us the full, complete idea only to be found in revelation. It is simply in the interests of his

epistemological assumptions that Ritschl condemns both natural theology and philosophical thought to sheer incapacity in the things of God. Yet it is utterly incredible to believe that God, the moral ruler of the universe, ordering all things for the bringing of the perfect kingdom, should have left Himself without witness in the world, or that He should have condemned humanity to eternal blindness to the manifold indications of His power and presence.

With regard to the condemnation of ecclesiastical dogma, the greatest unanimity prevails among all members of the school. The view of Church history thus presented is intolerably depressing. We are asked to believe that even before the close of the apostolic age the period of deterioration had begun, and has continued ever since with wearisome monotony. It would be difficult to reconcile such a theory with any belief in the spiritual presence, or even in the abiding influence, of the Lord in the Church. Harnack, the most renowned representative of the school, has set himself to prove Ritschl's contention that the religion of Christ succumbed to the temptation to achieve intellectual supremacy, and that from the first "dogma in its conception and development is a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel." The Hellenization of Christianity led to a false intellectualism. "The centre of gravity, instead of being placed in the historical Christ who founded the kingdom of God, is placed in the Christ who, as the Eternal Logos of God, was the mediator in the creation of the world." It is a view of the development of Christian doctrine that may be disproved

from the pages of Harnack himself. If there was one thing the Church was really unwilling to do, it was to define. It was only under the pressure of controversy that she was compelled to defend the truth with which she knew herself to be entrusted, by making it clear on which side lay error and mutilation. Not once nor twice only does Harnack show that the heresies against which the Fathers fought were at root anti-christian, and that the truth of the Gospel was only saved by the efforts of the Church theologians. Both in regard to Athanasius and Augustine, Harnack admits their abiding service to religion. Yet he takes essentially a pessimistic view as to the "acute Hellenization" of Christianity. To such a view we may reply with a twofold criticism.

(i) Pfleiderer, writing before the publication of Harnack's lectures on *What is Christianity?* rightly insists that "where a definite conception, based on history, of the nature of Christianity is so wholly wanting, the question as to whether individual phenomena are truly Christian, or a degeneration, corruption, and secularization of true Christianity, can only be answered according to personal taste."<sup>1</sup> The above-mentioned lectures of Harnack, though often illuminating in the highest degree, can hardly be said to alter the force of the criticism, since it is impossible to contend that history is on their side.

(ii) The Fathers fought *with* such weapons as they found ready for use; of these the Greek language and philosophy were the most in evidence. But the Fathers did not fight *for* any philosophical theory, but for the truth of the Gospel and for a transcendental

<sup>1</sup> *Development of Theology*, p. 299.

view of Christ's Person, which was as clearly intimated in the apostolic writings as in the traditional creeds. It should also be made clear to how great an extent the Church refused to commit herself to any metaphysical speculation. The doctrines of the essential Trinity, and of the two natures in Christ, as stated in the creeds of the Church, display a lack of metaphysical explanation which is almost startling. It was enough to put the truths to be held side by side without demanding any assent to a speculative combination, because experience had shown that where these truths were neglected or denied, sooner or later the Christian faith would itself of necessity perish.

We cannot therefore accept the Ritschlian view that the development of doctrine is only a conventional synonym for the progressive obscuration, if not destruction, of genuine Christianity—a process which the reformers were powerless to arrest, for they merely developed a new scholasticism to take the place of the old, but which was really ended when Kant shattered the claims of the theoretic reason, and when Ritschl first among theologians swept aside the accumulated rubbish of centuries, and restored to Christendom the Christian faith in its undefiled purity.

Such a view does more credit to the imagination than to the intellect.

It still remains to inquire what Ritschlianism proposes to offer us in the place of the old doctrines which it bids us discard ; and in this connection we may consider the Ritschlian doctrine of God, of Christ, of sin.

Concerning God, we are told that He is a spiritual personality. This is satisfactory as far as it goes, but to reach this conclusion it is necessary to employ a method of argument which to any ordinary being must appear decidedly metaphysical. Elaborate discussions as to the relation of God to time show how little reliance is to be placed in the promise, with which Ritschlianism takes the field, of a theology without metaphysics.

We are next told that God is love ; and from this doctrine the solution of the world problem is deduced with a boldness of speculation not excelled in the Hegelian philosophy. All the attributes of God are merged in love. It is not that Ritschl views love as the centre and combination of the divine qualities ; but in love they are all dissolved, omnipotence and righteousness alike. Love is, moreover, defined as a direction of the will ; and Ritschl refuses to let us ever move out of the charmed circle. God is His own self-end ; and apart from will God can neither be known nor imagined. So the formula, God is love, is narrowed and impoverished until it means something very different from that which it signified to the apostle who wrote it first. Nor does Ritschl draw either of the two conclusions which the traditional theology felt itself justified in drawing from this saying, and others.

(1) God is love, and God so loved the world.

(2) God is love, and He loved the Son before the world began.

Ritschl rejects the first view entirely. He repudiates the doctrine of the Universal Fatherhood of God, which, prepared for under the old dispensation, was

publicly proclaimed in the new, and has been driven like a golden wedge into the heart of humanity. With regard to the second deduction, Ritschl is working on traditional lines when he asserts that perfect love must needs find a corresponding object. It is entirely extraordinary that he should be so wholly unappreciative of the inner significance of Trinitarian dogma as not even to mention the solution thus offered, when finding the answer to the problem in his own fashion in the conception of a community of men bound together by laws of virtue and faith in Christ.

The Ritschlian doctrine of Christ is wholly unsatisfactory. It is true that stress is laid upon His perfect revelation of the Father; but the question cannot be evaded, "Who then was this Son of Man that also claimed to be the Son of God?" Is the latter expression to be understood as nothing but the rich mantle of inspired imagination with which the prophets clothed the Messianic figure of their hopes? Is it to be understood as nothing but a well deserved title, expressive of the value Jesus has for us, as the man in whom we see God most clearly, most closely? Does it merely denote solidarity of will, while denying dignity of essence? Here we are back in the old Athanasian controversy. Ritschlianism condemns the Arian view of the world, condemns also the doctrine of the two natures, holds that Athanasius saved a conviction of faith. But what is this conviction worth? If the very God was incarnate among men, we are in the realm, not merely of subjective values, but of transcendental realities. It is sheer cowardice to avoid the question which He



himself asks—*What think ye of Christ: whose Son is He?* It is utterly useless to ignore the experience and reflection of centuries of Christian thought. We cannot at this stage put ourselves back into the position of the first believers, who, for the gladness of the revelation, had but little time for reflection. For good, or for ill, the reason has intruded with its questionings, and it is impossible to refuse to listen to argument, or decline to seek and try to state the reason of the hope that is in us.

It is not that Ritschlianism solves the problems which are inevitably raised concerning Christ. It simply evades difficulties which it refuses to face. An affectation of ignorance is in no sense a solution. Catholic theology, relying upon the words of Christ, upon the age-long preparation of prophecy, upon the apostolic testimony; upon the revelation of Christ, not only in His words, but in His works; upon the power of His resurrection; has stated a view of Jesus of Nazareth, which has withstood the attacks of ages. It is formulated in the doctrine of the Trinity, and of the Divinity of our Lord. Other explanations have been tried, and found wanting. Little by little, the Church was constrained to protect her children from plausible falsehoods, by stating in simple language the truths she had received and defended. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has at any rate a clearness and consistency, compared with which the Ritschlian theory, as to the Divinity of Christ, is confused and fanciful. It neither solves a single problem, nor does it face the facts. The Scriptures are fancifully interpreted, Church history is misread, and we are left with a Christ who is not the Christ

of history, and who, *ex hypothesi*, cannot be the Christ of experience—a fanciful creation of the Ritschlian school, which can only be precariously supported by a theory of value-judgments of which no two members of the school give an identical explanation.

Passing from the doctrine of Christ to the doctrine of sin, we feel that the Ritschlian theory of redemption is no whit to be preferred to its Christological misinterpretations. That ignorance enters largely into sin we may admit, though it is, to say the least, remarkable that Ritschl should in this doctrine shew himself decidedly in favour of an intellectualism which he elsewhere denounces. Ritschlianism destroys the objectivity of sin, and substitutes a consciousness of guilt for the objective condemnation of sin, the reaction of God's essential righteousness against evil. These things Ritschl has destroyed. So the whole doctrine of redemption and reconciliation is changed. Standing before the cross, we may admire Christ's steadfastness to His vocation: we cannot look with awe on the mystery of atonement for the sins of the whole world. It is true that Ritschlianism does well to emphasize that sense of nearness to God, which sin disannuls, and forgiveness restores. But for all that, a doctrine of sin which does not recognize real estrangement, nor the need of real redemption, must be considered vitally defective. Moreover, a low conception of sin invariably leads to a low conception of Christ. For faith can see the terrible greatness of sin, since He who suffered was the Son of God. It is the person of the crucified that gives unique value to the sufferings of the cross.

There are two further points to be noticed in conclusion.

Ritschlianism claims to be truly scriptural, and truly Protestant. The claim to embody the only true exposition of Scripture needs little disproof. Over and over again, Ritschl and his followers find themselves in the plainest conflict with Scriptural representations. On such occasions, the language of the Apostles is lightly set aside—sometimes by astounding feats of exegesis, sometimes by a plain statement that this or that is not necessary to his argument, or is clearly of no permanent value. It must have seemed an almost hopeless task to have brought Ritschlianism into harmony with the statements of Scripture on the subjects, for instance, of the direct communion of believers with the exalted Christ, or of the character of sin and its terrible consequences. It argues no little ingenuity, and much persistence on the side of the Ritschlian interpreters, to advance the claim to be true to Scripture: but it is a claim which cannot be sustained.

Ritschlianism also claims to be the true evangelical theology. This is a claim we are not prepared to admit, or to deny, though it is energetically repudiated by many leaders of Protestant thought. Ritschl and his followers are often at excessive pains to make clear that they are only developing Lutheran ideas; and it must be admitted that, on the whole, they do not make out a bad case for themselves. However, this is a question best left to those who are most qualified to deal with it, or who feel themselves chiefly concerned in the matter. The present writer is unconscious of any such vital interest, nor does he

possess the necessary qualifications to decide whether the "plerophorie" with which the Ritschlians vindicate the Lutheran character for their theology is, or is not, justified. It is idle to suppose that the whole trend of Protestantism was revealed at the Reformation. To us, the question takes another form. Does the Ritschlian view of religion offer us a faith which is at once Christian and reasonable? We cannot acquiesce in the view perpetually put forward that Christianity must be either ultra-rational or non-rational. There are divers kinds of reason; there is the reason of merely intellectual capacity; there is the reason of moral consciousness; there is the reason of spiritual discernment. These are not to be considered mere modifications of, or additions to, the reason. They are three distinct kinds of reason. Therefore, when it is said that spiritual things are spiritually discerned, there is no kind of suggestion that they are essentially non-rational. All that is implied is that the merely intellectual reason will not suffice for the apprehension of these high matters. It becomes necessary to employ the spiritual reason to understand the things of God.

Ritschlianism, giving clear expression to much popular thought, and itself the child of modern philosophy, has failed to grasp this distinction. It therefore confronts us with a dilemma; if Christian, then not rational. This is an alternative we must refuse to accept. "If Christian, then also rational—but rational in the highest degree." But Ritschlianism, following Kant, banishes reason that faith may reign secure. This procedure recalls the words of the Latin historian, *solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant*,

for, indeed, there can be no real peace while reason is suppressed.

When in addition to this fundamental objection, we see that the Christianity which this new theology offers us is Christian only in name; that in many points it openly contradicts the Gospel record, and the substance of the apostolic preaching; when we find that the Divine fatherhood of all mankind is explicitly repudiated; that it is prepared to surrender to criticism the miracles and resurrection of the Lord without striking one blow in their defence; that the mystical union of the believer with Christ is indignantly rejected; that the predicate of Divinity is only to be attributed to traits in the character of the historical Christ, and is expressly denied as a proper description of His essential dignity; that the great sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world is explained away; that the Holy Spirit who sanctifieth all the elect people of God is barely mentioned; when, moreover, we remember—though we have been unwilling to press this consideration—the inconsistencies and contradictions rife among various members of the school, we might fancy that to us was addressed the Apostle's warning, *But not thus have you learned the Christ if indeed ye have heard Him and been taught in Him, even as is truth in Jesus.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eph. iv. 22. ὑμεῖς δὲ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστὸν εἴ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε καθὼς ἐστιν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ.

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